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THE WORKS OF WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

TWENTY-TWO VOLUMES

VOL. IV

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Montezuma Edition

HISTORY OF THE

BY

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

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WILFRED HAROLD MUNRO

PROFESSOR OF EUROPEAN HISTORY IN BROWN UNIVERSITY

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JOHN FOSTER KIRK

Victrices aquilas alium latus in orbem.

LUCAN. Pharsalia, fib. v., v. 288

VOL. IV

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CONQUEST OF MEXICO

CHAPTER V

INDIAN FLOTILLA DEFEATED—OCCUPATION OF THE CAUSEWAYS—DESPERATE ASSAULTS—FIRING OF THE PALACES—SPIRIT OF THE BESIEGED—BARRACKS FOR THE TROOPS

1521

NO sooner had Cortés received intelligence that his two officers had established themselves in their respective posts, than he ordered Sandoval to march on Iztapalapan. The cavalier's route led him through a country for the most part friendly; and at Chalco his little body of Spaniards was swelled by the formidable muster of Indian levies who awaited there his approach. After this junction, he continued his march without opposition till he arrived before the hostile city, under whose walls he found a large force drawn up to receive him. A battle followed, and the natives, after maintaining their ground sturdily for some time, were compelled to give way, and to seek refuge either on the water, or in that part of the town which hung over it. The remainder was speedily occupied by the Spaniards.

Meanwhile, Cortés had set sail with his flotilla, intending to support his lieutenant's attack by water. On drawing near the southern shore of the lake, he passed under the shadow of an insulated peak, since named from him the "Rock of the Marquis." It was held by a body of Indians, who saluted the fleet, as it passed, with showers of stones and arrows. Cortés, resolving to punish their audacity, and to clear the lake of his troublesome enemy, instantly landed with a hundred and fifty of his followers. He placed himself at their head, scaled the steep ascent, in the face of a driving storm of missiles, and, reaching the summit, put the garrison to the sword. There was a number of women and children, also, gathered in the place, whom he spared.¹

On the top of the eminence was a blazing beacon, serving to notify to the inhabitants of the capital when the Spanish fleet weighed anchor. Before Cortés had regained his brigantine, the canoes and *piraguas* of the enemy had left the harbors of Mexico, and were seen darkening the lake for many a rood. There were several hundred of them, all crowded with warriors, and advancing rapidly by means of their oars over the calm bosom of the waters.²

¹ "It was a beautiful victory," exclaims the Conqueror. "É entrámoslos de tal manera, que ninguno de ellos se escapó, excepto las Mugeres, y Niños; y en este combate me hiriéron veinte y cinco Españoles, pero fué muy hermosa Victoria." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 241.

² About five hundred boats, according to the general's own estimate (*Ibid.*, loc. cit.); but more than four thousand, according to Bernal Diaz (*Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 150); who, however, was not present.

Cortés, who regarded his fleet, to use his own language, as “the key of the war,” felt the importance of striking a decisive blow in the first encounter with the enemy.³ It was with chagrin, therefore, that he found his sails rendered useless by the want of wind. He calmly awaited the approach of the Indian squadron, which, however, lay on their oars at something more than musket-shot distance, as if hesitating to encounter these Leviathans of their waters. At this moment, a light air from land rippled the surface of the lake; it gradually freshened into a breeze, and Cortés, taking advantage of the friendly succor, which he may be excused, under all the circumstances, for regarding as especially sent him by Heaven, extended his line of battle, and bore down, under full press of canvas, on the enemy.⁴

The latter no sooner encountered the bows of their formidable opponents than they were overturned and sent to the bottom by the shock, or so much damaged that they speedily filled and sank. The water was covered with the wreck of broken canoes, and with the bodies of men struggling for life in the waves and vainly imploring their companions to take them on board their over-crowded vessels. The Spanish fleet, as it dashed through the mob of boats, sent off its volleys to the right

³ “Y como yo deseaba mucho, que el primer reencuentro, que con ellos obiessemos, fuese de mucha victoria; y se hiciesse de manera, que ellos cobrassen mucho temor de los bergantines, porque la llave de toda la Guerra estaba en ellos.” Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 241, 242.

⁴ “Plugo á nuestro Señor, que estándeznos mirando los unos á los otros, vino un viento de la Tierra muy favorable para embestir con ellos.” Ibid., p. 242.

and left with a terrible effect, completing the discomfiture of the Aztecs. The latter made no attempt at resistance, scarcely venturing a single flight of arrows, but strove with all their strength to regain the port from which they had so lately issued. They were no match in the chase, any more than in the fight, for their terrible antagonist, who, borne on the wings of the wind, careered to and fro at his pleasure, dealing death widely around him, and making the shores ring with the thunders of his ordnance. A few only of the Indian flotilla succeeded in recovering the port, and, gliding up the canals, found a shelter in the bosom of the city, where the heavier burden of the brigantines made it impossible for them to follow. This victory, more complete than even the sanguine temper of Cortés had prognosticated, proved the superiority of the Spaniards, and left them, henceforth, undisputed masters of the Aztec sea.⁵

It was nearly dusk when the squadron, coasting along the great southern causeway, anchored off the point of junction, called Xoloc, where the branch from Cojohuacan meets the principal dike. The avenue widened at this point, so as to afford

⁵ Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, loc. cit.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib 12, cap. 32.—I may be excused for again quoting a few verses from a beautiful description in “Madoc,” and one as pertinent as beautiful:

“Their thousand boats, and the ten thousand oars,
From whose broad bowls the waters fall and flash,
And twice ten thousand feathered helms, and shields,
Glittering with gold and scarlet plumery.
Onward they come with song and swelling horn;
. On the other side
Advance the *British* barks; the freshening breeze
Fills the broad sail; around the rushing keel
The waters sing, while proudly they sail on,
Lords of the water.”

room for two towers, or turreted temples, built of stone, and surrounded by walls of the same material, which presented altogether a position of some strength, and, at the present moment, was garrisoned by a body of Aztecs. They were not numerous, and Cortés, landing with his soldiers, succeeded without much difficulty in dislodging the enemy and in getting possession of the works.

It seems to have been originally the general's design to take up his own quarters with Olid at Cojohuacan. But, if so, he now changed his purpose, and wisely fixed on this spot as the best position for his encampment. It was but half a league distant from the capital, and, while it commanded its great southern avenue, had a direct communication with the garrison at Cojohuacan, through which he might receive supplies from the surrounding country. Here, then, he determined to establish his headquarters. He at once caused his heavy iron cannon to be transferred from the brigantines to the causeway, and sent orders to Olid to join him with half his force, while Sandoval was instructed to abandon his present quarters and advance to Cojohuacan, whence he was to detach fifty picked men of his infantry to the camp of Cortés. Having made these arrangements, the general busily occupied himself with strengthening the works at Xoloc and putting them in the best posture of defence.

During the first five or six days after their encampment the Spaniards experienced much annoyance from the enemy, who too late endeavored to prevent their taking up a position so near the

capital, and which, had they known much of the science of war, they would have taken better care themselves to secure. Contrary to their usual practice, the Indians made their attacks by night as well as by day. The water swarmed with canoes, which hovered at a distance in terror of the brigantines, but still approached near enough, especially under cover of the darkness, to send showers of arrows into the Christian camp, that fell so thick as to hide the surface of the ground and impede the movements of the soldiers. Others ran along the western side of the causeway, unprotected as it was by the Spanish fleet, and plied their archery with such galling effect that the Spaniards were forced to make a temporary breach in the dike, wide enough to admit two of their own smaller vessels, which, passing through, soon obtained an entire command of the interior basin as they before had of the outer. Still, the bold barbarians, advancing along the causeway, marched up within bow-shot of the Christian ramparts, sending forth such yells and discordant battle-cries that it seemed, in the words of Cortés, "as if heaven and earth were coming together." But they were severely punished for their temerity, as the batteries, which commanded the approaches to the camp, opened a desolating fire, that scattered the assailants and drove them back in confusion to their own quarters.⁶

⁶ "Y era tanta la multitud," says Cortés, "que por el Agua, y por la Tierra no viamos sino Gente, y daban tantas gritas, y alaridos, que parecia que se hundia el Mundo." Rel. Terc., p. 245.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 95.—Sahagún, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.

The two principal avenues to Mexico, those on the south and the west, were now occupied by the Christians. There still remained a third, the great dike of Tepejacac, on the north, which, indeed, taking up the principal street, that passed in a direct line through the heart of the city, might be regarded as a continuation of the dike of Iztapalapan. By this northern route a means of escape was still left open to the besieged, and they availed themselves of it, at present, to maintain their communications with the country and to supply themselves with provisions. Alvarado, who observed this from his station at Tacuba, advised his commander of it, and the latter instructed Sandoval to take up his position on the causeway. That officer, though suffering at the time from a severe wound received from a lance in one of the late skirmishes, hastened to obey, and thus, by shutting up its only communication with the surrounding country, completed the blockade of the capital.⁷

But Cortés was not content to wait patiently the effects of a dilatory blockade, which might exhaust the patience of his allies and his own resources. He determined to support it by such active assaults on the city as should further distress the besieged and hasten the hour of surrender. For this purpose he ordered a simultaneous attack, by the two commanders at the other stations, on the quarters nearest their encampments.

On the day appointed, his forces were under

⁷ Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 246, 247.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.—Herrera, Hist. de las Ind., dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 17.—Defensa, MS., cap. 28.

arms with the dawn. Mass, as usual, was performed; and the Indian confederates, as they listened with grave attention to the stately and imposing service, regarded with undisguised admiration the devotional reverence shown by the Christians, whom, in their simplicity, they looked upon as little less than divinities themselves.⁸ The Spanish infantry marched in the van, led on by Cortés, attended by a number of cavaliers, dismounted like himself. They had not moved far upon the causeway, when they were brought to a stand by one of the open breaches, that had formerly been traversed by a bridge. On the farther side a solid rampart of stone and lime had been erected, and behind this a strong body of Aztecs were posted, who discharged on the Spaniards, as they advanced, a thick volley of arrows. The latter vainly endeavored to dislodge them with their fire-arms and cross-bows; they were too well secured behind their defences.

Cortés then ordered two of the brigantines, which had kept along, one on each side of the causeway, in order to co-operate with the army, to station themselves so as to enfilade the position occupied by the enemy. Thus placed between two well-directed fires, the Indians were compelled to recede. The soldiers on board the vessels, springing to land, bounded like deer up the sides of the

⁸ Así como fué de dia se dixo vna misa de Espíritu Santo, que todos los Christianos oyeron con mucha devoción; é aun los Indios, como simples, é no entendientes de tan alto misterio, con admiracion estaban atentos notando el silencio de los cathólicos y el acatamiento que al altar, y al sacerdote los Christianos toviéron hasta recevir la benedicion." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 24.

dike. They were soon followed by their countrymen under Cortés, who, throwing themselves into the water, swam the undefended chasm and joined in pursuit of the enemy. The Mexicans fell back, however, in something like order, till they reached another opening in the dike, like the former, dismantled of its bridge, and fortified in the same manner by a bulwark of stone, behind which the retreating Aztecs, swimming across the chasm, and reinforced by fresh bodies of their countrymen, again took shelter.

They made good their post, till, again assailed by the cannonade from the brigantines, they were compelled to give way. In this manner breach after breach was carried; and at every fresh instance of success a shout went up from the crews of the vessels, which, answered by the long files of the Spaniards and their confederates on the causeway, made the Valley echo to its borders.

Cortés had now reached the end of the great avenue, where it entered the suburbs. There he halted to give time for the rear-guard to come up with him. It was detained by the labor of filling up the breaches in such a manner as to make a practicable passage for the artillery and horse and to secure one for the rest of the army on its retreat. This important duty was intrusted to the allies, who executed it by tearing down the ramparts on the margins and throwing them into the chasms, and, when this was not sufficient,—for the water was deep around the southern causeway,—by dislodging the great stones and rubbish from the dike itself, which was broad enough to admit of it, and

adding them to the pile, until it was raised above the level of the water.

The street on which the Spaniards now entered was the great avenue that intersected the town from north to south, and the same by which they had first visited the capital.⁹ It was broad and perfectly straight, and, in the distance, dark masses of warriors might be seen gathering to the support of their countrymen, who were prepared to dispute the further progress of the Spaniards. The sides were lined with buildings, the terraced roofs of which were also crowded with combatants, who, as the army advanced, poured down a pitiless storm of missiles on their heads, which glanced harmless, indeed, from the coat of mail, but too often found their way through the more common *escaupil* of the soldier, already gaping with many a ghastly rent. Cortés, to rid himself of this annoyance for the future, ordered his Indian pioneers to level the principal buildings as they advanced; in which work of demolition, no less than in the repair of the breaches, they proved of inestimable service.¹⁰

The Spaniards, meanwhile, were steadily, but

⁹ [This street, which is now called the Calle del Rastro, and traverses the whole city from north to south, leading from the Calle del Relox to the causeway of Guadalupe or Tepeyacac, was known at the period immediately following the Conquest as the Calle de Iz-tapalapa, which name was given to it through its whole extent. In the time of the ancient Mexicans its course was intercepted by the great temple, the principal door of which fronted upon it. After this edifice had been demolished, the street was opened from one end to the other. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 157.]

¹⁰ Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.—Ixtililochitl, *Hist. Chich.*, MS., cap. 95.—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 247, 248.

slowly, advancing, as the enemy recoiled before the rolling fire of musketry, though turning, at intervals, to discharge their javelins and arrows against their pursuers. In this way they kept along the great street until their course was interrupted by a wide ditch or canal, once traversed by a bridge, of which only a few planks now remained. These were broken by the Indians the moment they had crossed, and a formidable array of spears was instantly seen bristling over the summit of a solid rampart of stone, which protected the opposite side of the canal. Cortés was no longer supported by his brigantines, which the shallowness of the canals prevented from penetrating into the suburbs. He brought forward his arquebusiers, who, protected by the targets of their comrades, opened a fire on the enemy. But the balls fell harmless from the bulwarks of stone; while the assailants presented but too easy a mark to their opponents.

The general then caused the heavy guns to be brought up, and opened a lively cannonade, which soon cleared a breach in the works, through which the musketeers and crossbowmen poured in their volleys thick as hail. The Indians now gave way in disorder, after having held their antagonists at bay for two hours.¹¹ The latter, jumping into the

¹¹ Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 95.—Here terminates the work last cited of the Tezcucan chronicler; who has accompanied us from the earliest period of our narrative down to this point in the final siege of the capital. Whether the concluding pages of the manuscript have been lost, or whether he was interrupted by death, it is impossible to say. But the deficiency is supplied by a brief sketch of the principal events of the siege, which he has left in another of his writings. He had, undoubtedly, uncommon sources of information in his knowledge of the

shallow water, scaled the opposite bank without further resistance, and drove the enemy along the street towards the square, where the sacred pyramid reared its colossal bulk high over the other edifices of the city.

It was a spot too familiar to the Spaniards. On one side stood the palace of Axayacatl, their old quarters, the scene to many of them of so much suffering.¹² Opposite was the pile of low, irregular buildings once the residence of the unfortunate Montezuma;¹³ while a third side of the square was flanked by the *Coatcpantli*, or Wall of Serpents, which encompassed the great *teocalli* with its little city of holy edifices.¹⁴ The Spaniards halted at the entrance of the square, as if oppressed, and for the moment overpowered, by the bitter recollections that crowded on their minds. But their intrepid leader, impatient at their hesitation, loudly called on them to advance before the Aztecs had time to rally; and, grasping his target in one hand, and waving his sword high above his head with the

Indian languages and picture-writing, and in the oral testimony which he was at pains to collect from the actors in the scenes he describes. All these advantages are too often counterbalanced by a singular incapacity for discriminating—I will not say, between historic truth and falsehood (for what is truth?)—but between the probable, or rather the possible, and the impossible. One of the generation of primitive converts to the Romish faith, he lived in a state of twilight civilization, when, if miracles were not easily wrought, it was at least easy to believe them.

¹² [In the street of Santa Teresa. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 158.]

¹³ [Which forms what is called “El Empedradillo.” *Ibid.*]

¹⁴ [This wall, adorned with serpents, and crowned with the heads, strung together on stakes, of the human victims sacrificed in the temple, formed the front of the Plaza on the south side, extending from the corner of the Calle de Plateros east, towards the chains that enclose the cemetery of the cathedral. *Ibid.*]

other, he cried his war-cry of "St. Jago," and led them at once against the enemy.¹⁵

The Mexicans, intimidated by the presence of their detested foe, who, in spite of all their efforts, had again forced his way into the heart of their city, made no further resistance, but retreated, or rather fled, for refuge into the sacred enclosure of the *teocalli*, where the numerous buildings scattered over its ample area afforded many good points of defence. A few priests, clad in their usual wild and blood-stained vestments, were to be seen lingering on the terraces which wound round the stately sides of the pyramid, chanting hymns in honor of their god, and encouraging the warriors below to battle bravely for his altars.¹⁶

The Spaniards poured through the open gates into the area, and a small party rushed up the winding corridors to its summit. No vestige now remained there of the Cross, or of any other symbol of the pure faith to which it had been dedicated. A new effigy of the Aztec war-god had taken the place of the one demolished by the Christians, and raised its fantastic and hideous form in the same niche which had been occupied by its predecessor. The Spaniards soon tore away its golden mask and the rich jewels with which it was bedizened, and, hurling the struggling priests down the sides of

¹⁵ "I con todo eso no se determinaban los Christianos de entrar en la Plaça; por lo qual diciendo Hernando Cortés, que no era tiempo de mostrar cansancio, ni cobardía, con vna Rodela en la mano, apellidando Santiago, arremetió el primero." Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 18.

¹⁶ Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.

the pyramid, made the best of their way to their comrades in the area. It was full time.¹⁷

The Aztecs, indignant at the sacrilegious outrage perpetrated before their eyes, and gathering courage from the inspiration of the place, under the very presence of their deities, raised a yell of horror and vindictive fury, as, throwing themselves into something like order, they sprang, by a common impulse, on the Spaniards. The latter, who had halted near the entrance, though taken by surprise, made an effort to maintain their position at the gateway. But in vain; for the headlong rush of the assailants drove them at once into the square, where they were attacked by other bodies of Indians, pouring in from the neighboring streets. Broken, and losing their presence of mind, the troops made no attempt to rally, but, crossing the square, and abandoning the cannon, planted there, to the enemy, they hurried down the great street of Iztapalapan. Here they were soon mingled with the allies, who choked up the way, and who, catching the panic of the Spaniards, increased the confusion, while the eyes of the fugitives, blinded by the missiles that rained on them from the *azoteas*, were scarcely capable of distinguishing friend from foe. In vain Cortés endeavored to stay the torrent, and to restore order. His

¹⁷ Ixtlilxochitl, in his Thirteenth Relacion, embracing among other things a brief notice of the capture of Mexico, of which an edition has been given to the world by the industrious Bustamante, bestows the credit of this exploit on Cortés himself. "En la capilla mayor donde estaba Huitzilopoxctli, que llegaron Cortés e Ixtlilxuchitl á un tiempo, y ambos embistieron con el ídolo. *Cortés cogió la máscara de oro que tenía puesta este ídolo* con ciertas piedras preciosas que estaban engastadas en ella." Venida de los Españoles, p. 29.

voice was drowned in the wild uproar, as he was swept away, like drift-wood, by the fury of the current.

All seemed to be lost;—when suddenly sounds were heard in an adjoining street, like the distant tramp of horses galloping rapidly over the pavement. They drew nearer and nearer, and a body of cavalry soon emerged on the great square. Though but a handful in number,* they plunged boldly into the thick of the enemy. We have often had occasion to notice the superstitious dread entertained by the Indians of the horse and his rider. And, although the long residence of the cavalry in the capital had familiarized the natives in some measure with their presence, so long a time had now elapsed since they had beheld them that all their former mysterious terrors revived in full force; and, when thus suddenly assailed in flank by the formidable apparition, they were seized with a panic and fell into confusion. It soon spread to the leading files, and Cortés, perceiving his advantage, turned with the rapidity of lightning, and, at this time supported by his followers, succeeded in driving the enemy with some loss back into the enclosure.

It was now the hour of vespers, and, as night must soon overtake them, he made no further attempt to pursue his advantage. Ordering the trumpets, therefore, to sound a retreat, he drew off his forces in good order, taking with him the artillery which had been abandoned in the square. The allies first went off the ground, followed by

* [There were but three according to most accounts.—M.]

the Spanish infantry, while the rear was protected by the horse. The Aztecs hung on the closing files, and, though driven back by frequent charges of the cavalry, still followed in the distance, shooting off their ineffectual missiles, and filling the air with wild cries and howlings, like a herd of ravenous wolves disappointed of their prey. It was late before the army reached its quarters at Xoloc.¹⁸

Cortés had been well supported by Alvarado and Sandoval in this assault on the city; though neither of these commanders had penetrated the suburbs, deterred, perhaps, by the difficulties of the passage, which in Alvarado's case were greater than those presented to Cortés, from the greater number of breaches with which the dike in his quarter was intersected. Something was owing, too, to the want of brigantines, until Cortés supplied the deficiency by detaching half of his little navy to the support of his officers. Without their co-operation, however, the general himself could not have advanced so far, nor, perhaps, have succeeded at all in setting foot within the city. The success of this assault spread consternation not only among the Mexicans, but their vassals, as they saw that the formidable preparations for defence were to avail little against the white man, who had

¹⁸ "Los de Caballo revolvian sobre ellos, que siempre alanceaban, 6 mataban algunos; é como la Calle era muy larga, hubo lugar de hacerse esto quatro, ó cíneo veces. É aunque los Enemigos vian que recibian daño, venian los Perros tan rabiosos, que en ninguna manera los podiamos detener, ni que nos dejassen de seguir." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 250.—Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 18.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.

so soon, in spite of them, forced his way into the very heart of the capital. Several of the neighbouring places, in consequence, now showed a willingness to shake off their allegiance, and claimed the protection of the Spaniards. Among these were the territory of Xochimilco, so roughly treated by the invaders, and some tribes of Otomies, a rude but valiant people, who dwelt on the western confines of the Valley.¹⁹ Their support was valuable, not so much from the additional reinforcements which it brought, as from the greater security it gave to the army, whose outposts were perpetually menaced by these warlike barbarians.²⁰

The most important aid which the Spaniards received at this time was from Tezcoco, whose prince, Ixtlilxochitl, gathered the whole strength of his levies, to the number of fifty thousand, if we are to credit Cortés, and led them in person to the Christian camp. By the general's orders, they were distributed among the three divisions of the besiegers.²¹

¹⁹ The great mass of the Otomies were an untamed race, who roamed over the broad tracts of the plateau, far away to the north. But many of them, who found their way into the Valley, became blended with the Tezcuan, and even with the Tlascalan nation, making some of the best soldiers in their armies.

²⁰ [The Otomies inhabited all the country of Tula on the west, where their language is well preserved. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 161.]

²¹ “Istrisuchil [Ixtlilxochitl], que es de edad de veinte y tres, 6 veinte y cuatro años, muy esforzado, amado, y temido de todos.” (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 251.) The greatest obscurity prevails among historians in respect to this prince, whom they seem to have confounded very often with his brother and predecessor on the throne of Tezcoco. It is rare that either of them is mentioned by any other than his baptismal name of Hernando; and, if Herrera is correct in the assertion that this name was assumed by

Thus strengthened, Cortés prepared to make another attack upon the capital, and that before it should have time to recover from the former. Orders were given to his lieutenants on the other causeways to march at the same time, and co-operate with him, as before, in the assault. It was conducted in precisely the same manner as on the previous entry, the infantry taking the van, and the allies and cavalry following. But, to the great dismay of the Spaniards, they found two-thirds of the breaches restored to their former state, and the stones and other materials, with which they had been stopped, removed by the indefatigable enemy. They were again obliged to bring up the cannon, the brigantines ran alongside, and the enemy was dislodged, and driven from post to post, in the same manner as on the preceding attack. In short, the whole work was to be done over again. It was not till an hour after noon, that the army had won a footing in the suburbs.

Here their progress was not so difficult as before; for the buildings, from the terraces of which they had experienced the most annoyance, had been swept away. Still, it was only step by step that they forced a passage in face of the Mexican militia, who disputed their advance with the same spirit as before. Cortés, who would willingly have spared the inhabitants, if he could have brought

both, it may explain in some degree the confusion. (Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 18.) I have conformed in the main to the old Tezcucan chronicler, who gathered his account of his kinsman, as he tells us, from the records of his nation, and from the oral testimony of the contemporaries of the prince himself. *Venida de los Españoles*, pp. 30, 31.

them to terms, saw them with regret, as he says, thus desperately bent on a war of extermination. He conceived that there would be no way more likely to affect their minds than by destroying at once some of the principal edifices, which they were accustomed to venerate as the pride and ornament of the city.²²

Marching into the great square, he selected, as the first to be destroyed, the old palace of Axaya-catl, his former barracks. The ample range of low buildings was, it is true, constructed of stone; but the interior, as well as the outworks, the turrets, and roofs, was of wood. The Spaniards, whose associations with the pile were of so gloomy a character, sprang to the work of destruction with a satisfaction like that which the French mob may have felt in the demolition of the Bastile. Torches and firebrands were thrown about in all directions; the lower parts of the building were speedily on fire, which, running along the inflammable hangings and wood-work of the interior, rapidly spread to the second floor. There the element took freer range, and, before it was visible from without, sent up from every aperture and crevice a dense column of vapor, that hung like a funeral pall over the city. This was dissipated by a bright sheet of flame, which enveloped all the upper regions of the

²² "Daban ocasion, y nos forzaban á que totalmente les destruyeseamos. É de esta postrera tenia mas sentimiento, y me pesaba en el alma, y pensaba que forma ternia para los atemorizar, de manera, que viniessen en conocimiento de su yerro, y de el daño, que podian recibir de nosotros, y no hacia sino quemalles, y derrocalles las Torres de sus Ídolos, y sus Casas." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 254.

vast pile, till, the supporters giving way, the wide range of turreted chambers fell, amidst clouds of dust and ashes, with an appalling crash, that for a moment stayed the Spaniards in the work of devastation.²³

It was but for a moment. On the other side of the square, adjoining Montezuma's residence, were several buildings, as the reader is aware, appropriated to animals. One of these was now marked for destruction,—the House of Birds, filled with specimens of all the painted varieties which swarmed over the wide forests of Mexico. It was an airy and elegant building, after the Indian fashion, and, viewed in connection with its object, was undoubtedly a remarkable proof of refinement and intellectual taste in a barbarous monarch. Its light, combustible materials, of wood and bamboo, formed a striking contrast to the heavy stone edifices around it, and made it obviously convenient for the present purpose of the invaders. The torches were applied, and the fanciful structure was soon wrapped in flames, that sent their baleful splendors far and wide over city and lake. Its feathered inhabitants either perished in the fire, or those of stronger wing, bursting the burning lattice-work of the aviary, soared high into the air, and, fluttering for a while over the devoted city, fled with loud screams to their native forests beyond the mountains.

²³ [The ruins of this building were brought to light in the process of laying the foundations of the houses recently constructed on the southern side of the street of Santa Teresa, adjoining the convent of the Conception. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 162.]

The Aztecs gazed with inexpressible horror on this destruction of the venerable abode of their monarchs and of the monuments of their luxury and splendor. Their rage was exasperated almost to madness as they beheld their hated foes the Tlascalans busy in the work of desolation, and aided by the Tezcucans, their own allies, and not unfrequently their kinsmen. They vented their fury in bitter execrations, especially on the young prince Ixtlilxochitl, who, marching side by side with Cortés, took his full share in the dangers of the day. The warriors from the house-tops poured the most opprobrious epithets on him as he passed, denouncing him as a false-hearted traitor; false to his country and his blood,—reproaches not altogether unmerited, as his kinsman, who chronicles the circumstance, candidly confesses.²⁴ He gave little heed to their taunts, however, holding on his way with the dogged resolution of one true to the cause in which he was embarked; and, when he entered the great square, he grappled with the leader of the Aztec forces, wrenched a lance from his grasp, won by the latter from the Christians, and dealt him a blow with his mace, or *maquahuitl*, which brought him lifeless to the ground.²⁵

The Spanish commander, having accomplished the work of destruction, sounded a retreat, sending on the Indian allies, who blocked up the way before

²⁴ “Y desde las azoteas deshonrarle llamándole de traidor contra su patria y deudos, y otras razones pesadas, que á la verdad á *ellos les sobraba la razon*; mas Ixtlilxochitl callaba y peleaba, que mas estimaba la amistad y salud de los Cristianos que todo esto.” *Venida de los Españoles*, p. 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

him. The Mexicans, maddened by their losses, in wild transports of fury hung close on his rear, and, though driven back by the cavalry, still returned, throwing themselves desperately under the horses, striving to tear the riders from their saddles, and content to throw away their own lives for one blow at their enemy. Fortunately, the greater part of their militia was engaged with the assailants on the opposite quarters of the city, but, thus crippled, they pushed the Spaniards under Cortés so vigorously that few reached the camp that night without bearing on their bodies some token of the desperate conflict.²⁶

On the following day, and, indeed, on several days following, the general repeated his assaults with as little care for repose as if he and his men had been made of iron. On one occasion he advanced some way down the street of Tacuba, in which he carried three of the bridges, desirous, if possible, to open a communication with Alvarado, posted on the contiguous causeway. But the Spaniards in that quarter had not penetrated beyond the suburbs, still impeded by the severe character of the ground, and wanting, it may be, somewhat of that fiery impetuosity which the soldier feels who fights under the eye of his chief.

In each of these assaults the breaches were found more or less restored to their original state by the pertinacious Mexicans, and the materials, which had been deposited in them with so much labor,

²⁶ For the preceding pages relating to this second assault, see Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 254-256,—Sahagún, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 33,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 24,—Defensa, MS., cap. 28.

again removed. It may seem strange that Cortés did not take measures to guard against the repetition of an act which caused so much delay and embarrassment to his operations. He notices this in his Letter to the Emperor, in which he says that to do so would have required either that he should have established his quarters in the city itself, which would have surrounded him with enemies and cut off his communications with the country, or that he should have posted a sufficient guard of Spaniards—for the natives were out of the question—to protect the breaches by night, a duty altogether beyond the strength of men engaged in so arduous service through the day.²⁷

Yet this was the course adopted by Alvarado; who stationed at night a guard of forty soldiers for the defence of the opening nearest to the enemy. This was relieved by a similar detachment, in a few hours, and this again by a third, the two former still lying on their post; so that on an alarm a body of one hundred and twenty soldiers was ready on the spot to repel an attack. Sometimes, indeed, the whole division took up their bivouac in the neighborhood of the breach, resting on their arms, and ready for instant action.²⁸

But a life of such incessant toil and vigilance was almost too severe even for the stubborn constitu-

²⁷ Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 259.

²⁸ Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.—According to Herrera, Alvarado and Sandoval did not conceal their disapprobation of the course pursued by their commander in respect to the breaches: “I Alvarado, i Sandoval, por su parte, tambien lo hicieron mui bien, culpando á Hernando Cortés por estas retiradas, queriendo muchos que se quedara en lo ganado, por no bolver tantas veces á ello.” Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 19.

tions of the Spaniards. "Through the long night," exclaims Diaz, who served in Alvarado's division, "we kept our dreary watch; neither wind, nor wet, nor cold availing anything. There we stood, smarting as we were from the wounds we had received in the fight of the preceding day."²⁹ It was the rainy season, which continues in that country from July to September;³⁰ and the surface of the causeways, flooded by the storms, and broken up by the constant movement of such large bodies of men, was converted into a marsh, or rather quagmire, which added inconceivably to the distresses of the army.

The troops under Cortés were scarcely in a better situation. But few of them could find shelter in the rude towers that garnished the works of Xoloc. The greater part were compelled to bivouac in the open air, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather. Every man, unless his wounds prevented it, was required by the camp regulations to sleep on his arms; and they were often roused from their hasty slumbers by the midnight call to battle. For Guatemozin, contrary to the usual practice of his countrymen, frequently selected the hours of darkness to aim a blow at the enemy. "In short," exclaims the veteran soldier above quoted, "so unintermitting were our engagements, by day

²⁹ "Porque como era de noche, no aguardauan mucho, y desta manera que he dicho velauamos, que ni porque llouiesse, ni vientos, ni frios, y aunque estauamos metidos en medio de grandes lodos, y heridos, allí auiamos de estar." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.

³⁰ [That is to say, the more violent part of the rainy season, which lasts, in fact, from May or June to October. Conquista de Méjico (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 165.]

and by night, during the three months in which we lay before the capital, that to recount them all would but exhaust the reader's patience, and make him fancy he was perusing the incredible feats of a knight-errant of romance.”³¹

The Aztec emperor conducted his operations on a systematic plan, which showed some approach to military science. He not unfrequently made simultaneous attacks on the three several divisions of the Spaniards established on the causeways, and on the garrisons at their extremities. To accomplish this, he enforced the service not merely of his own militia of the capital, but of the great towns in the neighborhood, who all moved in concert, at the well-known signal of the beacon-fire, or of the huge drum struck by the priests on the summit of the temple. One of these general attacks, it was observed, whether from accident or design, took place on the eve of St. John the Baptist, the anniversary of the day on which the Spaniards made their second entry into the Mexican capital.³²

Notwithstanding the severe drain on his forces by this incessant warfare, the young monarch contrived to relieve them in some degree by different detachments, which took the place of one another. This was apparent from the different uniforms and military badges of the Indian battalions that

³¹ “Porque nouenta y tres dias estuuimos sobre esta tan fuerte ciudad, cada dia é de noche teniamos guerras, y combates; é no lo pongo aquí por capítulos lo que cada dia haziamos, porque me parece que seria gran prolijidad, é seria cosa para nunca acabar, y pareceria á los libros de Amadis, é de otros coros de caualleros.” Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.

³² Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 33.

successively came and disappeared from the field. At night a strict guard was maintained in the Aztec quarters, a thing not common with the nations of the plateau. The outposts of the hostile armies were stationed within sight of each other. That of the Mexicans was usually placed in the neighborhood of some wide breach, and its position was marked by a large fire in front. The hours for relieving guard were intimated by the shrill Aztec whistle, while bodies of men might be seen moving behind the flame, which threw a still ruddier glow over the cinnamon-colored skins of the warriors.

While thus active on land, Guatemozin was not idle on the water. He was too wise, indeed, to cope with the Spanish navy again in open battle; but he resorted to stratagem, so much more congenial to Indian warfare. He placed a large number of canoes in ambuscade among the tall reeds which fringed the southern shores of the lake, and caused piles, at the same time, to be driven into the neighboring shallows. Several *piraguas*, or boats of a larger size, then issued forth, and rowed near the spot where the Spanish brigantines were moored. Two of the smallest vessels, supposing the Indian barks were conveying provisions to the besieged, instantly stood after them, as had been foreseen. The Aztec boats fled for shelter to the reedy thicket where their companions lay in ambush. The Spaniards, following, were soon entangled among the palisades under the water. They were instantly surrounded by the whole swarm of Indian canoes, most of the men were wounded, several, including the two commanders, slain, and one of the brigand-

tines fell—a useless prize—into the hands of the victors. Among the slain was Pedro Barba, captain of the crossbowmen, a gallant officer, who had highly distinguished himself in the Conquest. This disaster occasioned much mortification to Cortés. It was a salutary lesson, that stood him in good stead during the remainder of the war.³³

Thus the contest was waged by land and by water,—on the causeway, the city, and the lake. Whatever else might fail, the capital of the Aztec empire was true to itself, and, mindful of its ancient renown, opposed a bold front to its enemies in every direction. As in a body whose extremities have been struck with death, life still rallied in the heart, and seemed to beat there, for the time, with even a more vigorous pulsation than ever.

It may appear extraordinary that Guatemozin should have been able to provide for the maintenance of the crowded population now gathered in the metropolis, especially as the avenues were all in the possession of the besieging army.³⁴ But, independently of the preparations made with this view before the siege, and of the loathsome sustenance daily furnished by the victims for sacrifice, supplies were constantly obtained from the surrounding country across the lake. This was so conducted, for a time, as in a great measure to escape observation; and even when the brigantines

³³ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 151.—Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 34.

³⁴ I recollect meeting with no estimate of their numbers; nor, in the loose arithmetic of the Conquerors, would it be worth much. They must, however, have been very great, to enable them to meet the assailants so promptly and efficiently on every point.

were commanded to cruise day and night, and sweep the waters of the boats employed in this service, many still contrived, under cover of the darkness, to elude the vigilance of the cruisers, and brought their cargoes into port. It was not till the great towns in the neighborhood cast off their allegiance that the supply began to fail, from the failure of its sources. This defection was more frequent, as the inhabitants became convinced that the government, incompetent to its own defence, must be still more so to theirs; and the Aztec metropolis saw its great vassals fall off one after another, as the tree over which decay is stealing parts with its leaves at the first blast of the tempest.³⁵

The cities which now claimed the Spanish general's protection supplied the camp with an incredible number of warriors; a number which, if we admit Cortés' own estimate, one hundred and fifty thousand,³⁶ could have only served to embarrass his operations on the long extended causeways. Yet it is true that the Valley, teeming with towns and villages, swarmed with a population—and one, too, in which every man was a warrior—greatly exceeding that of the present day. These levies were distributed among the three garrisons at the terminations of the causeways; and many found active employment in foraging the country for provisions, and yet more in carrying on hostilities against the places still unfriendly to the Spaniards.

³⁵ Defensa, MS., cap. 28.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 34.—The principal cities were Mexicaltzinco, Cuitlahuac, Iztapalapan, Mizquiz, Huitzilopochco, Colhuacan.

³⁶ “Y como aquel dia llevabamos mas de ciento y cincuenta mil Hombres de Guerra.” Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 280.

Cortés found further occupation for them in the construction of barracks for his troops, who suffered greatly from exposure to the incessant rains of the season, which were observed to fall more heavily by night than by day. Quantities of stone and timber were obtained from the buildings that had been demolished in the city. They were transported in the brigantines to the causeway, and from these materials a row of huts or barracks was constructed, extending on either side of the works of Xoloc. It may give some idea of the great breadth of the causeway at this place, one of the deepest parts of the lake, to add that, although the barracks were erected in parallel lines on the opposite sides of it, there still remained space enough for the army to defile between.³⁷

By this arrangement, ample accommodations were furnished for the Spanish troops and their Indian attendants, amounting in all to about two thousand. The great body of the allies, with a small detachment of horse and infantry, were quartered at the neighboring post of Cojohuacan, which served to protect the rear of the encampment and to maintain its communication with the country. A similar disposition of forces took place in the other divisions of the army, under Alvarado and Sandoval, though the accommodations provided for the shelter of the troops on their causeways

““Y vea Vuestra Magestad,” says Cortés to the emperor, “que tan ancha puede ser la Calzada, que va por lo mas hondo de la Laguna, que de la una parte, y de la otra iban estas Casas, y quedaba en medio hecha Calle, que muy á placer á pie, y á caballo íbamos, y veniamos por ella.” Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 260.

were not so substantial as those for the division of Cortés.

The Spanish camp was supplied with provisions from the friendly towns in the neighborhood, and especially from Tezcoco.³⁸ They consisted of fish, the fruits of the country, particularly a sort of fig borne by the *tuna* (*cactus opuntia*), and a species of cherry, or something much resembling it, which grew abundantly at this season. But their principal food was the *tortillas*, cakes of Indian meal, still common in Mexico, for which bake-houses were established, under the care of the natives, in the garrison towns commanding the causeways.³⁹ The allies, as appears too probable, reinforced

³⁸ The greatest difficulty under which the troops labored, according to Diaz, was that of obtaining the requisite medicaments for their wounds. But this was in a great degree obviated by a Catalan soldier, who by virtue of his prayers and incantations wrought wonderful cures both on the Spaniards and their allies. The latter, as the more ignorant, flocked in crowds to the tent of this military Æsculapius, whose success was doubtless in a direct ratio to the faith of his patients. *Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.*

³⁹ Diaz mourns over this unsavory diet. (*Hist. de la Conquista, loc. cit.*) Yet the Indian fig is an agreeable, nutritious fruit; and the *tortilla*, made of maize flour, with a slight infusion of lime, though not precisely a *morceau friand*, might pass for very tolerable camp fare. According to the lively Author of "Life in Mexico," it is made now precisely as it was in the days of the Aztecs. If so, a cooking receipt is almost the only thing that has not changed in this country of revolutions.*

* [Corn is placed in water, to which a little lime is added, and soaked over night. Or it is allowed to simmer over a slow fire. The husk is then easily separated and the grain is mashed or ground. The paste is then formed with the hands into a very thin cake which is cooked on an earthen pan placed over the fire. It is eaten with boiled beans and a mixture of Chile and lard.

Another common article of diet is the *tamale*. This is a mixture of chopped meat, Chile, and onions, covered with corn paste, then wrapped in corn or plantain leaves and boiled or baked.
—M.]

their frugal fare with an occasional banquet on human flesh, for which the battle-field unhappily afforded them too much facility, and which, however shocking to the feelings of Cortés, he did not consider himself in a situation, at that moment, to prevent.⁴⁰

Thus the tempest, which had been so long mustering, broke at length, in all its fury, on the Aztec capital. Its unhappy inmates beheld the hostile legions encompassing them about, with their glittering files stretching as far as the eye could reach. They saw themselves deserted by their allies and vassals in their utmost need; the fierce stranger penetrating into their secret places, violating their temples, plundering their palaces, wasting the fair city by day, firing its suburbs by night, and intrenching himself in solid edifices under their walls, as if determined never to withdraw his foot while one stone remained upon another. All this they saw; yet their spirits were unbroken; and, though famine and pestilence were beginning to creep over

⁴⁰ "Quo strages," says Martyr, "erat crudelior, eo magis copiose ac opipare cœnabant Guazuzingui & Tascaltecani, cæterique prouinciales auxiliarii, qui soliti sunt hostes in prælio cadentes intra suos ventres sepelire; nec vetare ausus fuisse Cortesius." (De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 8.) "Y los otros les mostraban los de su Ciudad hechos pedazos, diciéndoles, que los habian de cenar aquella noche, y almorzar otro dia, como de hecho lo hacian." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 256.) Yet one may well be startled by the assertion of Oviedo, that the carnivorous monsters fished up the bloated bodies of those drowned in the lake to swell their repast! "Ni podian ver los ojos de los Christianos, é Cathólicos, mas espantable é aborrecida cosa, que ver en el Real de los Amigos confederados el continuo ejercicio de comer carne asada, ó cocida de los Indios enemigos, é aun de los que mataban en las canoas, ó se ahogaban, é despues el agua los echaba en la superficie de la laguna, ó en la costa, no los dexaban de pescar, é aposentar en sus vientres." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 24.

them, they still showed the same determined front to their enemies. Cortés, who would gladly have spared the town and its inhabitants, beheld this resolution with astonishment. He intimated more than once, by means of the prisoners whom he released, his willingness to grant them fair terms of capitulation. Day after day he fully expected his proffers would be accepted. But day after day he was disappointed.⁴¹ He had yet to learn how tenacious was the memory of the Aztecs, and that, whatever might be the horrors of their present situation, and their fears for the future, they were all forgotten in their hatred of the white man.

⁴¹ "I confidently expected both on that and the preceding day that they would come with proposals of peace, as I had myself, whether victorious or otherwise, constantly made overtures to that end. But on their part we never perceived a sign of such intention." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 261.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL ASSAULT ON THE CITY—DEFEAT OF THE SPANIARDS—THEIR DISASTROUS CONDITION—SACRIFICE OF THE CAPTIVES—DEFECTION OF THE ALLIES—CONSTANCY OF THE TROOPS

1521

FAMINE was now gradually working its way into the heart of the beleaguered city. It seemed certain that, with this strict blockade, the crowded population must in the end be driven to capitulate, though no arm should be raised against them. But it required time; and the Spaniards, though constant and enduring by nature, began to be impatient of hardships scarcely inferior to those experienced by the besieged. In some respects their condition was even worse, exposed as they were to the cold, drenching rains, which fell with little intermission, rendering their situation dreary and disastrous in the extreme.

In this state of things, there were many who would willingly have shortened their sufferings and taken the chance of carrying the place by a *coup de main*. Others thought it would be best to get possession of the great market of Tlatelolco, which, from its situation in the northwestern part

of the city, might afford the means of communication with the camps of both Alvarado and Sandoval. This place, encompassed by spacious porticoes, would furnish accommodations for a numerous host; and, once established in the capital, the Spaniards would be in a position to follow up the blow with far more effect than at a distance.

These arguments were pressed by several of the officers, particularly by Alderete, the royal treasurer, a person of much consideration, not only from his rank, but from the capacity and zeal he had shown in the service. In deference to their wishes, Cortés summoned a council of war, and laid the matter before it. The treasurer's views were espoused by most of the high-mettled cavaliers, who looked with eagerness to any change of their present forlorn and wearisome life; and Cortés, thinking it, probably, more prudent to adopt the less expedient course than to enforce a cold and reluctant obedience to his own opinion, suffered himself to be overruled.¹

A day was fixed for the assault, which was to be made simultaneously by the two divisions under Alvarado and the commander-in-chief. Sandoval was instructed to draw off the greater part of his forces from the northern causeway and to unite himself with Alvarado, while seventy picked

¹ Such is the account explicitly given by Cortés to the emperor. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 264.) Bernal Diaz, on the contrary, speaks of the assault as first conceived by the general himself. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.) Yet Diaz had not the best means of knowing; and Cortés would hardly have sent home a palpable misstatement that could have been so easily exposed.

soldiers were to be detached to the support of Cortés.

On the appointed morning, the two armies, after the usual celebration of mass, advanced along their respective causeways against the city.² They were supported, in addition to the brigantines, by a numerous fleet of Indian boats, which were to force a passage up the canals, and by a countless multitude of allies, whose very numbers served in the end to embarrass their operations. After clearing the suburbs, three avenues presented themselves, which all terminated in the square of Tlateholeo. The principal one, being of much greater width than the other two, might rather be called a causeway than a street, since it was flanked by deep canals on either side. Cortés divided his force into three bodies. One of them he placed under Alderete, with orders to occupy the principal street. A second he gave in charge to Andres de Tápia and Jorge de Alvarado; the former a cavalier of courage and capacity, the latter a younger brother of Don Pedro, and possessed of the intrepid spirit which belonged to that chivalrous family. These were to penetrate by one of the parallel streets, while the general himself, at the head of the third division, was to occupy the other. A small body of cavalry, with two or three field-pieces, was sta-

² This punctual performance of mass by the army, in storm and in sunshine, by day and by night, among friends and enemies, draws forth a warm eulogium from the archiepiscopal editor of Cortés: "En el Campo, en una Calzada, entre Enemigos, trabajando dia, y noche, nunca se omitia la Missa, páraque toda la obra se atri-buyesse á Dios, y mas en unos Meses, en que incomodan las Aguas de el Cielo; y encima del Agua las Habitaciones, ó malas Tiendas." Lorenzana, p. 266, nota.

tioned as a reserve in front of the great street of Tacuba, which was designated as the rallying-point for the different divisions.³

Cortés gave the most positive instructions to his captains not to advance a step without securing the means of retreat by carefully filling up the ditches and the openings in the causeway. The neglect of this precaution by Alvarado, in an assault which he had made on the city but a few days before, had been attended with such serious consequences to his army that Cortés rode over, himself, to his officer's quarters, for the purpose of publicly reprimanding him for his disobedience of orders. On his arrival at the camp, however, he found that his offending captain had conducted the affair with so much gallantry, that the intended reprimand—though well deserved—subsided into a mild rebuke.⁴

The arrangements being completed, the three divisions marched at once up the several streets. Cortés, dismounting, took the van of his own squadron, at the head of his infantry. The Mexicans fell back as he advanced, making less resistance than usual. The Spaniards pushed on, carrying one barricade after another, and carefully filling up the gaps with rubbish, so as to secure

³ In the treasurer's division, according to the general's Letter, there were 70 Spanish foot, 7 or 8 horse, and 15,000 or 20,000 Indians; in Tápia's, 80 foot, and 10,000 allies; and in his own, 8 horse, 100 infantry, and "an infinite number of allies." (*Ibid., ubi supra.*) The looseness of the language shows that a few thousands more or less were of no great moment in the estimate of the Indian forces.

⁴ "Otro dia de mañana acordé de ir á su Real para le reprender lo pasado. . . . Y visto, no les imputé tanta culpa, como antes parecía tener, y platicado cerca de lo que había de hacer, yo me bolví á nuestro Real aquel dia." *Rel. Terc. de Cortés*, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 263, 264.

themselves a footing. The canoes supported the attack, by moving along the canals and grappling with those of the enemy; while numbers of the nimble-footed Tlascalans, scaling the terraces, passed on from one house to another, where they were connected, hurling the defenders into the streets below. The enemy, taken apparently by surprise, seemed incapable of withstanding for a moment the fury of the assault; and the victorious Christians, cheered on by the shouts of triumph which arose from their companions in the adjoining streets, were only the more eager to be first at the destined goal.

Indeed, the facility of his success led the general to suspect that he might be advancing too fast; that it might be a device of the enemy to draw them into the heart of the city and then surround or attack them in the rear. He had some misgivings, moreover, lest his too ardent officers, in the heat of the chase, should, notwithstanding his commands, have overlooked the necessary precaution of filling up the breaches. He accordingly brought his squadron to a halt, prepared to baffle any insidious movement of his adversary. Meanwhile he received more than one message from Alderete, informing him that he had nearly gained the market. This only increased the general's apprehension that, in the rapidity of his advance, he might have neglected to secure the ground. He determined to trust no eyes but his own, and, taking a small body of troops, proceeded at once to reconnoitre the route followed by the treasurer.

He had not proceeded far along the great street,

or causeway, when his progress was arrested by an opening ten or twelve paces wide, and filled with water, at least two fathoms deep, by which a communication was formed between the canals on the opposite sides. A feeble attempt had been made to stop the gap with the rubbish of the causeway, but in too careless a manner to be of the least service; and a few straggling stones and pieces of timber only showed that the work had been abandoned almost as soon as begun.⁵ To add to his consternation, the general observed that the sides of the causeway in this neighborhood had been pared off, and, as was evident, very recently. He saw in all this the artifice of the cunning enemy, and had little doubt that his hot-headed officer had rushed into a snare deliberately laid for him. Deeply alarmed, he set about repairing the mischief as fast as possible, by ordering his men to fill up the yawning chasm.

But they had scarcely begun their labors, when the hoarse echoes of conflict in the distance were succeeded by a hideous sound of mingled yells and war-whoops, that seemed to rend the very heavens. This was followed by a rushing noise, as of the tread of thronging multitudes, showing that the tide of battle was turned back from its former course, and was rolling on towards the spot

⁵ "Y hallé, que habian pasado una quebrada de la Calle, que era de diez, ó doce pasos de ancho; y el Agua, que por ella pasaba, era de hondura de mas de dos estados, y al tiempo que la pasaron habian echado en ella madera, y cañas de carrizo, y como pasaban pocos á pocos, y con tiento, no se habia hundido la madera y cañas." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 268.—See also Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.

where Cortés and his little band of cavaliers were planted.

His conjecture proved too true. Alderete had followed the retreating Aztecs with an eagerness which increased with every step of his advance. He had carried the barricades which had defended the breach, without much difficulty, and, as he swept on, gave orders that the opening should be stopped. But the blood of the high-spirited cavaliers was warmed by the chase, and no one cared to be detained by the ignoble occupation of filling up the ditches, while he could gather laurels so easily in the fight; and they all pressed on, exhorting and cheering one another with the assurance of being the first to reach the square of Tlatelolco. In this way they suffered themselves to be decoyed into the heart of the city; when suddenly the horn of Guatemozin—the sacred symbol, heard only in seasons of extraordinary peril—sent forth a long and piercing note from the summit of a neighboring *teocalli*. In an instant, the flying Aztecs, as if maddened by the blast, wheeled about, and turned on their pursuers. At the same time, countless swarms of warriors from the adjoining streets and lanes poured in upon the flanks of the assailants, filling the air with the fierce, unearthly cries which had reached the ears of Cortés, and drowning, for a moment, the wild dissonance which reigned in the other quarters of the capital.⁶

⁶ Gomara, Crónica, cap. 138.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, p. 37.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.—Guatemozin's horn rang in the ears of Bernal Diaz for many a day after the battle. “Quatemuz, y manda tocar su corneta, q̄ era vna

The army, taken by surprise, and shaken by the fury of the assault, was thrown into the utmost disorder. Friends and foes, white men and Indians, were mingled together in one promiscuous mass. Spears, swords, and war-clubs were brandished together in the air. Blows fell at random. In their eagerness to escape, they trod down one another. Blinded by the missiles which now rained on them from the *azoteas*, they staggered on, scarcely knowing in what direction, or fell, struck down by hands which they could not see. On they came, like a rushing torrent sweeping along some steep declivity, and rolling in one confused tide towards the open breach, on the farther side of which stood Cortés and his companions, horror-struck at the sight of the approaching ruin. The foremost soon plunged into the gulf, treading one another under the flood, some striving ineffectually to swim, others, with more success, to clamber over the heaps of their suffocated comrades. Many, as they attempted to scale the opposite sides of the slippery dike, fell into the water, or were hurried off by the warriors in the canoes, who added to the horrors of the rout by the fresh storm of darts and javelins which they poured on the fugitives.

Cortés, meanwhile, with his brave followers, kept his station undaunted on the other side of the breach. "I had made up my mind," he says, "to

señal q quando aquella se tocasse, era q auian de pelear sus Capitanes de manera, q hiziesen presa, ó morir sobre ello; y retumbaua el sonido, q se metia en los oidos, y de q lo oyéro aquellos sus esquadrones, y Capitanes: saber yo aquí dezir aora, con q rabia, y esfuerço se metian entre nosotros á nos echar mano, es cosa de espanto." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152.

die, rather than desert my poor followers in their extremity!"⁷ With outstretched hands he endeavored to rescue as many as he could from the watery grave, and from the more appalling fate of captivity. He as vainly tried to restore something like presence of mind and order among the distracted fugitives. His person was too well known to the Aztecs, and his position now made him a conspicuous mark for their weapons. Darts, stones, and arrows fell around him thick as hail, but glanced harmless from his steel helmet and armor of proof. At length a cry of "Malinche," "Malinche," arose among the enemy; and six of their number, strong and athletic warriors, rushing on him at once, made a violent effort to drag him on board their boat. In the struggle he received a severe wound in the leg, which, for the time, disabled it. There seemed to be no hope for him; when a faithful follower, Cristóval de Olea, perceiving his general's extremity, threw himself on the Aztecs, and with a blow cut off the arm of one savage, and then plunged his sword in the body of another. He was quickly supported by a comrade named Lerma, and by a Tlascalan chief, who, fighting over the prostrate body of Cortés, despatched three more of the assailants; though the heroic Olea paid dearly for his self-devotion, as he fell mortally wounded by the side of his general.⁸

⁷ "É como el negocio fué tan de súpito, y ví que mataban la Gente determiné de me quedar allí, y morir peleando." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 268.

⁸ Ixtlilxochitl, who would fain make his royal kinsman a sort of residuary legatee for all unappropriated, or even doubtful, acts of heroism, puts in a sturdy claim for him on this occasion. A painting,

The report soon spread among the soldiers that their commander was taken; and Quiñones, the captain of his guard, with several others, pouring in to the rescue, succeeded in disentangling Cortés from the grasp of his enemies, who were struggling with him in the water, and, raising him in their arms, placed him again on the causeway. One of his pages, meanwhile, had advanced some way through the press, leading a horse for his master to mount. But the youth received a wound in the throat from a javelin, which prevented him from effecting his object. Another of his attendants was more successful. It was Guzman, his chamberlain; but, as he held the bridle while Cortés was

he says, on one of the gates of a monastery of Tlatelolco, long recorded the fact that it was the Tezcucan chief who saved the life of Cortés. (*Venida de los Españoles*, p. 38.) But Camargo gives the full credit of it to Olea, on the testimony of "a famous Tlascalan warrior," present in the action, who reported it to him. (*Hist. de Tlascala, MS.*) The same is stoutly maintained by Bernal Diaz, townsman of Olea, to whose memory he pays a hearty tribute, as one of the best men and bravest soldiers in the army. (*Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 152, 204.) Saavedra, the poetic chronicler,—something more of a chronicler than poet,—who came on the stage before all that had borne arms in the Conquest had left it, gives the laurel also to Olea, whose fate he commemorates in verses that at least aspire to historic fidelity:

"Túvole con las manos abraçado,
Y Francisco de Olea el valeroso,
Vn valiente Español, y su criado
Le tiró vn tajo brauo y riguroso:
Las dos manos á cereen le ha cortado,
Y él le libró del trámece trabajoso
Huuo muy gran rumor, porque dezian,
Que ya en prisión amarga le tenian.

"Llegáron otros Indios arriscados,
Y á Olea matáron en vn punto,
Cercáron á Cortés por todos lados,
Y al miserable cuerpo ya difunto;
Y viendo sus sentidos recobrados,
Puso mano á la espada y daga junto.
Antonio de Quiñones llegó luego,
Capitan de la guarda ardiendo en fuego."

EL PEREGRINO INDIANO, Canto 20.

assisted into the saddle, he was snatched away by the Aztecs, and, with the swiftness of thought, hurried off by their canoes. The general still lingered, unwilling to leave the spot while his presence could be of the least service. But the faithful Quiñones, taking his horse by the bridle, turned his head from the breach, exclaiming, at the same time, that "his master's life was too important to the army to be thrown away there."⁹

Yet it was no easy matter to force a passage through the press. The surface of the causeway, cut up by the feet of men and horses, was knee-deep in mud, and in some parts was so much broken that the water from the canals flowed over it. The crowded mass, in their efforts to extricate themselves from their perilous position, staggered to and fro like a drunken man. Those on the flanks were often forced by the lateral pressure of their comrades down the slippery sides of the dike, where they were picked up by the canoes of the enemy, whose shouts of triumph proclaimed the savage joy with which they gathered in every new victim for the sacrifice. Two cavaliers, riding by the general's side, lost their footing, and rolled down the declivity into the water. One was taken and his horse killed. The other was happy enough to escape. The valiant ensign, Corral, had a similar piece of good fortune. He slipped into the

⁹ "É aquel Capitan que estaba con el General, que se decia Antonio de Quiñones, díxole: Vamos, Señor, de aquí, y salvemos vuestra Persona, pues que ya esto está de manera, que es morir desesperado atender; é sin vos, ninguno de nosotros puede escapar, que no es esfuerzo, sino poquedad, porfiar aquí otra cosa." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.

canal, and the enemy felt sure of their prize, when he again succeeded in recovering the causeway, with the tattered banner of Castile still flying above his head. The barbarians set up a cry of disappointed rage as they lost possession of a trophy to which the people of Anahuac attached, as we have seen, the highest importance, hardly inferior in their eyes to the capture of the commander-in-chief himself.¹⁰

Cortés at length succeeded in regaining the firm ground, and reaching the open place before the great street of Tacuba. Here, under a sharp fire of the artillery, he rallied his broken squadrons, and, charging at the head of the little body of horse, which, not having been brought into action, were still fresh, he beat off the enemy. He then commanded the retreat of the two other divisions. The scattered forces again united; and the general, sending forward his Indian confederates, took the rear with a chosen body of cavalry to cover the retreat of the army, which was effected with but little additional loss.¹¹

Andres de Tápia was despatched to the western causeway to acquaint Alvarado and Sandoval with the failure of the enterprise. Meanwhile the two

¹⁰ It may have been the same banner which is noticed by Mr. Bullock as treasured up in the Hospital of Jesus, "where," says he, "we beheld the identical embroidered standard under which the great captain wrested this immense empire from the unfortunate Montezuma." *Six Months in Mexico*, vol. i. chap. 10.

¹¹ For this disastrous affair, besides the Letter of Cortés, and the Chronicle of Diaz, so often quoted, see Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 33,—Camargo, *Hist. de Tlascala*, MS.,—Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 138,—Torquemada, *Monarch. Ind.*, lib. 4, cap. 94,—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 26, 48.





captains had penetrated far into the city. Cheered by the triumphant shouts of their countrymen in the adjacent streets, they had pushed on with extraordinary vigor, that they might not be outstripped in the race of glory. They had almost reached the market-place, which lay nearer to their quarters than to the general's, when they heard the blast from the dread horn of Guatemozin,¹² followed by the overpowering yell of the barbarians, which had so startled the ears of Cortés; till at length the sounds of the receding conflict died away in the distance. The two captains now understood that the day must have gone hard with their countrymen. They soon had further proof of it, when the victorious Aztecs, returning from the pursuit of Cortés, joined their forces to those engaged with Sandoval and Alvarado, and fell on them with redoubled fury. At the same time they rolled on the ground two or three of the bloody heads of the Spaniards, shouting the name of "Malinche." The captains, struck with horror at the spectacle,—though they gave little credit to the words of the enemy,—instantly ordered a retreat. Indeed, it was not in their power to maintain their ground against the furious assaults of the besieged, who poured on them, swarm after swarm, with a desperation of which, says one who was

¹² "El resonido de la corneta de Guatemuz."—Astolfo's magic horn was not more terrible:

"Dico che 'l corno è di sì orribil suono,
Ch' ovunque s' oda, fa fuggir la gente.
Non può trovarsi al mondo un cor sì buono,
Che possa non fuggir come lo sente.
Rumor di vento e di tremuoto, e 'l tuono,
A par del suon di questo, era niente."

ORLANDO FURIOSO, Canto 15, st. 15.

there, “ although it seems as if it were now present to my eyes, I can give but a faint idea to the reader. God alone could have brought us off safe from the perils of that day.”¹³ The fierce barbarians followed up the Spaniards to their very intrenchments. But here they were met, first by the cross-fire of the brigantines, which, dashing through the palisades planted to obstruct their movements, completely enfiladed the causeway, and next by that of the small battery erected in front of the camp, which, under the management of a skilful engineer, named Medrano, swept the whole length of the defile. Thus galled in front and on flank, the shattered columns of the Aztecs were compelled to give way and take shelter under the defences of the city.

The greatest anxiety now prevailed in the camp regarding the fate of Cortés; for Tápia had been detained on the road by scattered parties of the enemy, whom Guatemozin had stationed there to interrupt the communication between the camps. He arrived at length, however, though bleeding from several wounds. His intelligence, while it reassured the Spaniards as to the general’s personal safety, was not calculated to allay their uneasiness in other respects.

Sandoval, in particular, was desirous to acquaint himself with the actual state of things and the further intentions of Cortés. Suffering as he was

¹³ “ Por q̄ yo no lo sé aquí escriuir q̄ aora q̄ me pongo á pensar en ello, es como si visiblemente lo viesse, mas bueluo á dezir, y ansi es verdad, q̄ si Dios no nos diera esfuerço, segun estauamos todos heridos: él nos saluo, q̄ de otra manera no nos podiamos llegar á nuestros ranchos.” Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152.

from three wounds, which he had received in that day's fight, he resolved to visit in person the quarters of the commander-in-chief. It was mid-day—for the busy scenes of the morning had occupied but a few hours—when Sandoval remounted the good steed on whose strength and speed he knew he could rely. It was a noble animal, well known throughout the army, and worthy of its gallant rider, whom it had carried safe through all the long marches and bloody battles of the Conquest.¹⁴ On the way he fell in with Guatemozin's scouts, who gave him chase, and showered around him volleys of missiles, which, fortunately, found no vulnerable point in his own harness or that of his well-barbed charger.

On arriving at the camp, he found the troops there much worn and dispirited by the disaster of the morning. They had good reason to be so. Besides the killed, and a long file of wounded, sixty-two Spaniards, with a multitude of allies, had fallen alive into the hands of the enemy,—an enemy who was never known to spare a captive. The loss of two field-pieces and seven horses crowned their own disgrace and the triumph of the Aztecs. This loss, so insignificant in European warfare, was a great one here, where both horses and artillery, the most powerful arms of war against the

¹⁴ This renowned steed, who might rival the Babieca of the Cid, was named Motilla, and, when one would pass unqualified praise on a horse, he would say, "He is as good as Motilla." So says that prince of chroniclers, Diaz, who takes care that neither beast nor man shall be defrauded of his fair guerdon in these campaigns against the infidel. He was of a chestnut color, it seems, with a star in his forehead, and, luckily for his credit, with only one foot white. See *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 152, 205.

barbarians, were not to be procured without the greatest cost and difficulty.¹⁵

Cortés, it was observed, had borne himself throughout this trying day with his usual intrepidity and coolness. The only time he was seen to falter was when the Mexicans threw down before him the heads of several Spaniards, shouting, at the same time, "Sandoval," "Tonatiuh," the well-known epithet of Alvarado. At the sight of the gory trophies he grew deadly pale; but, in a moment recovering his usual confidence, he endeavored to cheer up the drooping spirits of his followers. It was with a cheerful countenance that he now received his lieutenant; but a shade of sadness was visible through this outward composure, showing how the catastrophe of the *puente cuidada*, "the sorrowful bridge," as he mournfully called it, lay heavy at his heart.

To the cavalier's anxious inquiries as to the cause of the disaster, he replied, "It is for my sins that it has befallen me, son Sandoval;" for such was the affectionate epithet with which Cortés often addressed his best-beloved and trusty officer. He then explained to him the immediate cause, in the negligence of the treasurer. Further conversation followed, in which the general declared his purpose to forego active hostilities for a few days. "You must take my place," he continued, "for I am too

¹⁵ The cavaliers might be excused for not wantonly venturing their horses, if, as Diaz asserts, they could only be replaced at an expense of eight hundred or a thousand dollars apiece: "Porque costaua en aquella sazon vn cauallo ochocientos pesos, y aun algunos costauan á mas de mil." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151. See, also, *ante*, Book II. chap. 3, note 14.

much crippled at present to discharge my duties. You must watch over the safety of the camps. Give especial heed to Alvarado's. He is a gallant soldier, I know it well; but I doubt the Mexican hounds may, some hour, take him at disadvantage."¹⁶ These few words showed the general's own estimation of his two lieutenants; both equally brave and chivalrous, but the one uniting with these qualities the circumspection so essential to success in perilous enterprises, in which the other was signally deficient. The future conqueror of Guatemala had to gather wisdom, as usual, from the bitter fruits of his own errors. It was under the training of Cortés that he learned to be a soldier. The general, having concluded his instructions, affectionately embraced his lieutenant, and dismissed him to his quarters.

It was late in the afternoon when he reached them; but the sun was still lingering above the western hills, and poured his beams wide over the Valley, lighting up the old towers and temples of Tenochtitlan with a mellow radiance, that little harmonized with the dark scenes of strife in which the city had so lately been involved. The tranquillity of the hour, however, was on a sudden broken by the strange sounds of the great drum in the temple of the war-god,—sounds which recalled the *noche triste*, with all its terrible images,

¹⁶ "Mira pues veis que yo no puedo ir á todas partes, á vos os encomiendo estos trabajos, pues veis q̄ estoy herido y coxo; ruego os pongais cobro en estos tres reales; bien sé q̄ Pedro de Alvarado, y sus Capitanes, y soldados aurán batallado, y hecho como caualleros, mas temo el gran poder destos perros no les ayan desbaratado." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152.

to the minds of the Spaniards, for that was the only occasion on which they had ever heard them.¹⁷ They intimated some solemn act of religion within the unhallowed precincts of the *teocalli*; and the soldiers, startled by the mournful vibrations, which might be heard for leagues across the Valley, turned their eyes to the quarter whence they proceeded. They there beheld a long procession winding up the huge sides of the pyramid; for the camp of Alvarado was pitched scarcely a mile from the city, and objects are distinctly visible at a great distance in the transparent atmosphere of the table-land.

As the long file of priests and warriors reached the flat summit of the *teocalli*, the Spaniards saw the figures of several men stripped to their waists, some of whom, by the whiteness of their skins, they recognized as their own countrymen. They were the victims for sacrifice. Their heads were gaudily decorated with coronals of plumes, and they carried fans in their hands. They were urged along by blows, and compelled to take part in the dances in honor of the Aztec war-god. The unfortunate captives, then stripped of their sad finery, were stretched, one after another, on the great stone of sacrifice. On its convex surface their breasts were heaved up conveniently for the diabolical purpose of the priestly executioner, who cut asunder the ribs by a strong blow with his sharp razor of *itztli*, and, thrusting his hand into the wound, tore away

¹⁷ "Vn atambor de muy triste sonido, enfin como instrumento de demonios, y retumbaua tanto, que se oia dos, ó tres leguas." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, loc. cit.

the heart, which, hot and reeking, was deposited on the golden censer before the idol. The body of the slaughtered victim was then hurled down the steep stairs of the pyramid, which, it may be remembered, were placed at the same angle of the pile, one flight below another; and the mutilated remains were gathered up by the savages beneath, who soon prepared with them the cannibal repast which completed the work of abomination! ¹⁸

We may imagine with what sensations the stupefied Spaniards must have gazed on this horrid spectacle, so near that they could almost recognize the persons of their unfortunate friends, see the struggles and writhing of their bodies, hear—or fancy that they heard—their screams of agony! yet so far removed that they could render them no assistance. Their limbs trembled beneath them, as they thought what might one day be their own fate; and the bravest among them, who had hitherto gone to battle as careless and light-hearted as to the banquet or the ball-room, were unable, from this time forward, to encounter their ferocious enemy with-

¹⁸ Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.—“Sacándoles los corazones, sobre una piedra que era como un pilar cortado, tan grueso como un hombre y algo mas, y tan alto como medio estadio; allí á cada uno echado de espaldas sobre aquella piedra, que se llama Techeatl, uno le tiraba por un brazo, y otro por el otro, y tambien por las piernas otros dos, y venia uno de aquellos Sátrapas, con un pedernal, como un hierro de lanza enhastado, en un palo de dos palmos de largo, le daba un golpe con ambas manos en el pecho; y sacando aquel pedernal, por la misma llaga metia la mano, y arrancábale el corazon, y luego fregaba con él la boca del Ídolo; y echaba á rodar el cuerpo por las gradas abajo, que serian como cincuenta ó sesenta gradas, por allí abajo iba quebrando las piernas y los brazos, y dando cabezas con la cabeza, hasta que llegaba abajo aun vivo.” Sahagún, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 35.

out a sickening feeling, much akin to fear, coming over them.¹⁹

Such was not the effect produced by this spectacle on the Mexican forces, gathered at the end of the causeway. Like vultures maddened by the smell of distant carrion, they set up a piercing cry, and, as they shouted that "such should be the fate of all their enemies," swept along in one fierce torrent over the dike. But the Spaniards were not to be taken by surprise; and, before the barbarian horde had come within their lines, they opened such a deadly fire from their battery of heavy guns, supported by the musketry and cross-bows, that the assailants were compelled to fall back slowly, but fearfully mangled, to their former position.

The five following days passed away in a state of inaction, except, indeed, so far as was necessary to repel the sorties made from time to time by the militia of the capital. The Mexicans, elated with their success, meanwhile, abandoned themselves to jubilee; singing, dancing, and feasting on the mangled relics of their wretched victims. Guatemozin sent several heads of the Spaniards,

¹⁹ At least, such is the honest confession of Captain Diaz, as stout-hearted a soldier as any in the army. He consoles himself, however, with the reflection that the tremor of his limbs intimated rather an excess of courage than a want of it, since it arose from a lively sense of the great dangers into which his daring spirit was about to hurry him! The passage in the original affords a good specimen of the inimitable *naïreté* of the old chronicler: "Digan agora todos aquellos caualleros, que desto del militar entienden, y se han hallado en trances peligrosos de muerte, á que fin echarán mi temor, si es á mucha flaqueza de animo, ó á mucho esfuerço, porque como he dicho, sentia yo en mi pensamiento, que auia de poner por mi persona, batallando en parte que por fuerça auia de temer la muerte mas que otras vcezes, y por esto me temblaua el coraçon, y temia la muerte." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

as well as of the horses, round the country, calling on his old vassals to forsake the banners of the white men, unless they would share the doom of the enemies of Mexico. The priests now cheered the young monarch and the people with the declaration that the dread Huitzilopochtli, their offended deity, appeased by the sacrifices offered up on his altars, would again take the Aztecs under his protection, and deliver their enemies, before the expiration of eight days, into their hands.²⁰

This comfortable prediction, confidently believed by the Mexicans, was thundered in the ears of the besieging army in tones of exultation and defiance. However it may have been contemned by the Spaniards, it had a very different effect on their allies. The latter had begun to be disgusted with a service so full of peril and suffering and already protracted far beyond the usual term of Indian hostilities. They had less confidence than before in the Spaniards. Experience had shown that they were neither invincible nor immortal, and their recent reverses made them even distrust the ability of the Christians to reduce the Aztec metropolis. They recalled to mind the ominous words of Xicotencatl, that "so sacrilegious a war could come to no good for the people of Anahuac." They felt that their arm was raised against the gods of their country. The prediction of the oracle fell heavy on their hearts. They had little doubt of its ful-

²⁰ Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 20.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, pp. 41, 42.—"Y nos dezian, que de aí á ocho dias no auia de quedar ninguno de nosotros á vida, porque assí se lo auian prometido la noche antes sus Dioses." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 153.

filment, and were only eager to turn away the bolt from their own heads by a timely secession from the cause.

They took advantage, therefore, of the friendly cover of night to steal away from their quarters. Company after company deserted in this manner, taking the direction of their respective homes. Those belonging to the great towns of the Valley, whose allegiance was the most recent, were the first to cast it off. Their example was followed by the older confederates, the militia of Cholula, Tepeaca, Tezcuco, and even the faithful Tlascala. There were, it is true, some exceptions to these, and among them Ixtlilxochitl, the young lord of Tezcuco, and Chichemecatl, the valiant Tlascalan chieftain, who, with a few of their immediate followers, still remained true to the banner under which they had enlisted. But their number was insignificant. The Spaniards beheld with dismay the mighty array, on which they relied for support, thus silently melting away before the breath of superstition. Cortés alone maintained a cheerful countenance. He treated the prediction with contempt, as an invention of the priests, and sent his messengers after the retreating squadrons, beseeching them to postpone their departure, or at least to halt on the road, till the time, which would soon elapse, should show the falsehood of the propheey.

The affairs of the Spaniards at this crisis must be confessed to have worn a gloomy aspect. Deserted by their allies, with their ammunition nearly exhausted, cut off from the customary supplies

from the neighborhood, harassed by unintermitting vigils and fatigues, smarting under wounds, of which every man in the army had his share, with an unfriendly country in their rear and a mortal foe in front, they might well be excused for faltering in their enterprise. They found abundant occupation by day in foraging the country, and in maintaining their position on the causeways against the enemy, now made doubly daring by success and by the promises of their priests; while at night their slumbers were disturbed by the beat of the melancholy drum, the sounds of which, booming far over the waters, tolled the knell of their murdered comrades. Night after night fresh victims were led up to the great altar of sacrifice; and, while the city blazed with the illumination of a thousand bonfires on the terraced roofs of the dwellings and in the areas of the temples, the dismal pageant, showing through the fiery glare like the work of the ministers of hell, was distinctly visible from the camp below. One of the last of the sufferers was Guzman, the unfortunate chamberlain of Cortés, who lingered in captivity eighteen days before he met his doom.²¹

Yet in this hour of trial the Spaniards did not

²¹ Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 36.—Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Españoles*, pp. 41, 42.—The Castilian scholar will see that I have not drawn on my imagination for the picture of these horrors: “Digamos aora lo que los Mexicanos hazian de noche en sus grandes, y altos Cues; y es, q̄ tañian su maldito atambor, que dixe otra vez que era el de mas maldito sonido, y mas triste q̄ se podia inuētar, y sonaua muy lexos; y tañian otros peores instrumentos. En fin, cosas diabólicas, y tenia grandes lumbres, y dava grādissimos gritos, y siluos, y en aquel instāte estauan sacrificando de nuestros cōpañeros, de los q̄ tomárō á Cortés, que supimos q̄ sacrificaron diez dias arreo, hasta que los acabáron, y el postrero dexárō á

falter. Had they faltered, they might have learned a lesson of fortitude from some of their own wives, who continued with them in the camp, and who displayed a heroism, on this occasion, of which history has preserved several examples. One of these, protected by her husband's armor, would frequently mount guard in his place when he was wearied. Another, hastily putting on a soldier's *escaupil* and seizing a sword and lance, was seen, on one occasion, to rally their retreating countrymen and lead them back against the enemy. Cortés would have persuaded these Amazonian dames to remain at Tlascala; but they proudly replied, "It was the duty of Castilian wives not to abandon their husbands in danger, but to share it with them, —and die with them, if necessary." And well did they do their duty.²²

Amidst all the distresses and multiplied embarrassments of their situation, the Spaniards still remained true to their purpose. They relaxed in no degree the severity of the blockade. Their camps still occupied the only avenues to the city; and their batteries, sweeping the long defiles at every fresh assault of the Aztecs, mowed down hundreds of the assailants. Their brigantines still rode on

Christoual de Guzman, q̄ viuo lo tuuiéron diez y ocho dias, segun dixérō tres Capitanes Mexicanos q̄ prēdimos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 153.

²² "Que no era bien, que Mugeres Castellanas dexasen á sus Maridos, iendo á la Guerra, i que adonde ellos muriesen, moririan ellas." (Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 22.) The historian has embalmed the names of several of these heroines in his pages, who are, doubtless, well entitled to share the honors of the Conquest: Beatriz de Palacios, María de Estrada, Juana Martin, Isabel Rodriguez, and Beatriz Bermudez.

the waters, cutting off the communication with the shore. It is true, indeed, the loss of the auxiliary canoes left a passage open for the occasional introduction of supplies to the capital.²³ But the whole amount of these supplies was small; and its crowded population, while exulting in their temporary advantage and the delusive assurances of their priests, were beginning to sink under the withering grasp of an enemy within, more terrible than the one which lay before their gates.

²³ *Ibid.*, *ubi supra*.

CHAPTER VII

SUCCESSES OF THE SPANIARDS—FRUITLESS OFFERS
TO GUATEMOZIN—BUILDINGS RAZED TO THE
GROUND—TERRIBLE FAMINE—THE TROOPS GAIN
THE MARKET-PLACE—BATTERING-ENGINE

1521

THUS passed away the eight days prescribed by the oracle; and the sun which rose upon the ninth beheld the fair city still beset on every side by the inexorable foe. It was a great mistake of the Aztec priests—one not uncommon with false prophets, anxious to produce a startling impression on their followers—to assign so short a term for the fulfilment of their prediction.¹

The Tezcucan and Tlascalan chiefs now sent to acquaint their troops with the failure of the prophecy, and to recall them to the Christian camp. The Tlascalans, who had halted on the way, returned, ashamed of their credulity, and with ancient feelings of animosity heightened by the artifice of which they had been the dupes. Their example was followed by many of the other con-

¹ And yet the priests were not so much to blame, if, as Solis assures us, “the Devil went about very industriously in those days, insinuating into the ears of his flock what he could not into their hearts.” *Conquista*, lib. 5, cap. 22.

federates, with the levity natural to a people whose convictions are the result not of reason, but of superstition. In a short time the Spanish general found himself at the head of an auxiliary force which, if not so numerous as before, was more than adequate to all his purposes. He received them with politic benignity; and, while he reminded them that they had been guilty of a great crime in thus abandoning their commander, he was willing to overlook it in consideration of their past services. They must be aware that these services were not necessary to the Spaniards, who had carried on the siege with the same vigor during their absence as when they were present. But he was unwilling that those who had shared the dangers of the war with him should not also partake its triumphs, and be present at the fall of their enemy, which he promised, with a confidence better founded than that of the priests in their prediction, should not be long delayed.

Yet the menaces and machinations of Guatemozin were still not without effect in the distant provinces. Before the full return of the confederates, Cortés received an embassy from Cuernavaca, ten or twelve leagues distant, and another from some friendly towns of the Otomies, still farther off, imploring his protection against their formidable neighbors, who menaced them with hostilities as allies of the Spaniards. As the latter were then situated, they were in a condition to receive succor much more than to give it.² Most of the officers

² "Y teníamos necesidad antes de ser socorridos, que de dar socorro." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 272.

were, accordingly, opposed to granting a request compliance with which must still further impair their diminished strength. But Cortés knew the importance, above all, of not betraying his own inability to grant it. "The greater our weakness," he said, "the greater need have we to cover it under a show of strength."³

He immediately detached Tápia with a body of about a hundred men in one direction, and Sandoval with a somewhat larger force in the other, with orders that their absence should not in any event be prolonged beyond ten days.⁴ The two captains executed their commissions promptly and effectually. They each met and defeated his adversary in a pitched battle, laid waste the hostile territories, and returned within the time prescribed. They were soon followed by ambassadors from the conquered places, soliciting the alliance of the Spaniards; and the affair terminated by an accession of new confederates, and, what was more important, a conviction in the old that the Spaniards were both willing and competent to protect them.

Fortune, who seldom dispenses her frowns or her favors single-handed, further showed her good will to the Spaniards, at this time, by sending a vessel into Vera Cruz laden with ammunition and military stores. It was part of the fleet destined for

³ "God knows," says the general, "the peril in which we all stood; pero como nos convenia mostrar mas esfuerzo y ánimo, que nunca, y morir peleando, disimulabamos nuestra flaqueza assí con los Amigos como con los Enemigos." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 275.

⁴ Tápia's force consisted of 10 horse and 80 foot; the chief alguacil, as Sandoval was styled, had 18 horse and 100 infantry. *Ibid.*, loc. cit.—Also Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.

the Florida coast by the romantic old knight, Ponce de Leon. The cargo was immediately taken by the authorities of the port, and forwarded, without delay, to the camp, where it arrived most seasonably, as the want of powder, in particular, had begun to be seriously felt.⁵ With strength thus renovated, Cortés determined to resume active operations, but on a plan widely differing from that pursued before.

In the former deliberations on the subject, two courses, as we have seen, presented themselves to the general. One was to intrench himself in the heart of the capital and from this point carry on hostilities; the other was the mode of proceeding hitherto followed. Both were open to serious objections, which he hoped would be obviated by the one now adopted. This was to advance no step without securing the entire safety of the army, not only on its immediate retreat, but in its future inroads. Every breach in the causeway, every canal in the streets, was to be filled up in so solid a manner that the work should not be again disturbed. The materials for this were to be furnished by the buildings, every one of which, as the army advanced, whether public or private, hut, temple, or palace, was to be demolished! Not a building in their path was to be spared. They were all indis-

⁵ “Pólvora y Ballestas, de que teníamos muy estrema necesidad.” (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 278.) It was probably the expedition in which Ponce de Leon lost his life; an expedition to the very land which the chivalrous cavalier had himself first visited in quest of the Fountain of Health. The story is pleasantly told by Irving, as the reader may remember, in his “Companions of Columbus.”

criminate to be levelled, until, in the Conqueror's own language, "the water should be converted into dry land," and a smooth and open ground be afforded for the manœuvres of the cavalry and artillery!⁶

Cortés came to this terrible determination with great difficulty. He sincerely desired to spare the city, "the most beautiful thing in the world,"⁷ as he enthusiastically styles it, and which would have formed the most glorious trophy of his conquest. But in a place where every house was a fortress and every street was cut up by canals so embarrassing to his movements, experience proved it was vain to think of doing so and becoming master of it. There was as little hope of a peaceful accommodation with the Aztecs, who, so far from being broken by all they had hitherto endured, and the long perspective of future woes, showed a spirit as haughty and implacable as ever.⁸

The general's intentions were learned by the Indian allies with unbounded satisfaction; and they answered his call for aid by thousands of pioneers, armed with their *coas*, or hoes of the country, all testifying the greatest alacrity in helping on the

⁶ The calm and simple manner in which the *Conquistador*, as usual, states this in his *Commentaries*, has something appalling in it from its very simplicity: "Acordé de tomar un medio para nuestra seguridad, y para poder mas estrechar á los Enemigos; y fué, que como fuessemos ganando por las Calles de la Ciudad, que fuesen derrocando todas las Casas de ellas, del un lado, y del otro; por manera, que no fuessemos un paso adelante, sin lo dejar todo asolado, y lo que era Agua, hacerlo Tierra-firme, aunque hobiesse toda la dilacion, que se pudiesse seguir." Rel. Tere., ap. Lorenzana, p. 279.

⁷ "Porque era la mas hermosa cosa del Mundo." Ibid., p. 278.

⁸ "Mas antes en el pelear, y en todos sus ardides, los hallabamos con mas ánimo, que nunca." Ibid., p. 279.

work of destruction.⁹ In a short time the breaches in the great causeways were filled up so effectually that they were never again molested. Cortés himself set the example by carrying stones and timber with his own hands.¹⁰ The buildings in the suburbs were then thoroughly levelled, the canals were filled up with the rubbish, and a wide space around the city was thrown open to the manœuvres of the cavalry, who swept over it free and unresisted. The Mexicans did not look with indifference on these preparations to lay waste their town and leave them bare and unprotected against the enemy. They made incessant efforts to impede the labors of the besiegers; but the latter, under cover of their guns, which kept up an unintermitting fire, still advanced in the work of desolation.¹¹

The gleam of fortune which had so lately broken out on the Mexicans again disappeared; and the dark mist, after having been raised for a moment, settled on the doomed capital more heavily than

⁹ Yet we shall hardly credit the Tezcucan historian's assertion that a hundred thousand Indians flocked to the camp for this purpose: "Viniesen todos los labradores con sus coas para este efecto con toda brevedad: . . . llegáron *mas de cien mil de ellos.*" Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Españoles*, p. 42.

¹⁰ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 153.

¹¹ Sahagun, who gathered the story from the actors, and from the aspect of the scene before the devastation had been wholly repaired, writes with the animation of an eye-witness: "La guerra por agua y por tierra fué tan porfiada y tan sangrienta, que era espanto de verla, y no hay posibilidad, para decir las particularidades que pasaban; eran tan espesas las saetas, y dardos, y piedras, y palos, que se arrojavan los unos á los otros, que quitavan la claridad del sol; era tan grande la vocería, y grita, de hombres y mugeres, y niños que voceaban y lloraban, que era cosa de grima; era tan grande la polvareda, y ruido, en derrocar y quemar casas, y robar lo que en ellas habia, y cautivar niños y mugeres, *que parecía un juicio.*" *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12 cap. 38.

before. Famine, with all her hideous train of woes, was making rapid strides among its accumulated population. The stores provided for the siege were exhausted. The casual supply of human victims, or that obtained by some straggling pirogue from the neighboring shores, was too inconsiderable to be widely felt.¹² Some forced a scanty sustenance from a mucilaginous substance gathered in small quantities on the surface of the lake and canals.¹³ Others appeased the cravings of appetite by devouring rats, lizards, and the like loathsome reptiles, which had not yet deserted the starving city. Its days seemed to be already numbered. But the page of history has many an example to show that there are no limits to the endurance of which humanity is capable, when animated by hatred and despair.

With the sword thus suspended over it, the Spanish commander, desirous to make one more effort to save the capital, persuaded three Aztec nobles, taken in one of the late actions, to bear a message from him to Guatemozin; though they undertook it with reluctance, for fear of the consequences to themselves. Cortés told the emperor that all had now been done that brave men could

¹² The flesh of the Christians failed to afford them even the customary nourishment, since the Mexicans said it was intolerably bitter; a miracle considered by Captain Diaz as expressly wrought for this occasion. *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 153.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ubi supra.—When dried in the sun, this slimy deposit had a flavor not unlike that of cheese, and formed part of the food of the poorer classes at all times, according to Clavigero. *Stor. del Messico*, tom. ii. p. 222.

* [This was the *ahuahutle* before described. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 290, note.—M.]

do in defence of their country. There remained no hope, no chance of escape, for the Mexicans. Their provisions were exhausted; their communications were cut off; their vassals had deserted them; even their gods had betrayed them. They stood alone, with the nations of Anahuac banded against them. There was no hope but in immediate surrender. He besought the young monarch to take compassion on his brave subjects, who were daily perishing before his eyes; and on the fair city, whose stately buildings were fast crumbling into ruins. "Return to the allegiance," he concludes, "which you once proffered to the sovereign of Castile. The past shall be forgotten. The persons and property, in short, all the rights, of the Aztecs shall be respected. You shall be confirmed in your authority, and Spain will once more take your city under her protection."¹⁴

The eye of the young monarch kindled, and his dark cheek flushed with sudden anger, as he listened to proposals so humiliating. But, though his bosom glowed with the fiery temper of the Indian, he had the qualities of a "gentle cavalier," says one of his enemies, who knew him well.¹⁵ He did no harm to the envoys; but, after the heat of the moment had passed off, he gave the matter a calm consideration, and called a council of his wise men and warriors to deliberate upon it. Some were for accepting the proposals, as offering the only chance of preservation. But the priests took a different

¹⁴ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 154.

¹⁵ "Mas como el Guatemu^z era mancero, y muy gentil-hombre y de buena disposicion." *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

view of the matter. They knew that the ruin of their own order must follow the triumph of Christianity. "Peace was good," they said, "but not with the white men." They reminded Guatemozin of the fate of his uncle Montezuma, and the requital he had met with for all his hospitality; of the seizure and imprisonment of Cacama, the caique of Tezcuco; of the massacre of the nobles by Alvarado; of the insatiable avarice of the invaders, which had stripped the country of its treasures; of their profanation of the temples; of the injuries and insults which they had heaped without measure on the people and their religion. "Better," they said, "to trust in the promises of their own gods, who had so long watched over the nation. Better, if need be, give up our lives at once for our country, than drag them out in slavery and suffering among the false strangers."¹⁶

The eloquence of the priests, artfully touching the various wrongs of his people, roused the hot blood of Guatemozin. "Since it is so," he abruptly exclaimed, "let us think only of supplying the wants of the people. Let no man, henceforth, who values his life, talk of surrender. We can at least die like warriors."¹⁷

¹⁶ "Mira primero lo que nuestros Dioses te han prometido, toma buen consejo sobre ello y no te fies de Malinche, ni de sus palabras, que mas vale que todos muramos en esta ciudad peleando, que no verno en poder de quiē nos harán esclavos, y nos atormentarán." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 154.

¹⁷ "Y entonces el Guatemuз medio enojado les dixo: Pues assi quereis que sea, guardad mucho el maiz, y bastimentos que tenemos, y muramos todos peleando: y desde aquí adelante ninguno sea osado á me demandar pazes, si no yo le mataré: y allí todos prometieron de pelear noches, y dias, y morir en la defensa de su ciudad." Ibid., ubi supra.

The Spaniards waited two days for the answer to their embassy. At length it came, in a general sortie of the Mexicans, who, pouring through every gate of the capital, like a river that has burst its banks, swept on, wave upon wave, to the very intrenchments of the besiegers, threatening to overwhelm them by their numbers. Fortunately, the position of the latter on the dikes secured their flanks, and the narrowness of the defile gave their small battery of guns all the advantages of a larger one. The fire of artillery and musketry blazed without intermission along the several causeways, belching forth volumes of sulphurous smoke, that, rolling heavily over the water, settled dark around the Indian city and hid it from the surrounding country. The brigantines thundered, at the same time, on the flanks of the columns, which, after some ineffectual efforts to maintain themselves, rolled back in wild confusion, till their impotent fury died away in sullen murmurs within the capital.

Cortés now steadily pursued the plan he had laid down for the devastation of the city. Day after day the several armies entered by their respective quarters, Sandoval probably directing his operations against the northeastern district. The buildings, made of the porous *tetzontli*, though generally low, were so massy and extensive, and the canals were so numerous, that their progress was necessarily slow. They, however, gathered fresh accessions of strength every day from the numbers who flocked to the camp from the surrounding country, and who joined in the work of destruction

with a hearty good will which showed their eagerness to break the detested yoke of the Aztecs. The latter raged with impotent anger as they beheld their lordly edifices, their temples, all they had been accustomed to venerate, thus ruthlessly swept away; their canals, constructed with so much labor and what to them seemed science, filled up with rubbish; their flourishing city, in short, turned into a desert, over which the insulting foe now rode triumphant. They heaped many a taunt on the Indian allies. "Go on," they said, bitterly: "the more you destroy, the more you will have to build up again hereafter. If we conquer, you shall build for us; and if your white friends conquer, they will make you do as much for them."¹⁸ The event justified the prediction.

In their rage they rushed blindly on the corps which covered the Indian pioneers. But they were as often driven back by the impetuous charge of the cavalry, or received on the long pikes of Chinantla, which did good service to the besiegers in their operations. At the close of day, however, when the Spaniards drew off their forces, taking care to send the multitudinous host of confederates first from the ground, the Mexicans usually rallied for a more formidable attack. Then they poured out from every lane and by-way, like so many mountain streams, sweeping over the broad level

¹⁸ "Los de la Ciudad como veian tanto estrago, por esforzarse, decian á nuestros Amigos, que no ficiessen sino quemar, y destruir, que ellos se las harian tornar á hacer de nuevo, porque si ellos eran vencedores, ya ellos sabian, que habia de ser assí, y si no, que las habian de hacer para nosotros." Rel. Tere. de Córtes, ap. Lorenzana, p. 286.

cleared by the enemy, and falling impetuously on their flanks and rear. At such times they inflicted considerable loss in their turn, till an ambush, which Cortés laid for them among the buildings adjoining the great temple, did them so much mischief that they were compelled to act with more reserve.

At times the war displayed something of a chivalrous character, in the personal rencontres of the combatants. Challenges passed between them, and especially between the native warriors. These combats were usually conducted on the *azoteas*, whose broad and level surface afforded a good field of fight. On one occasion, a Mexican of powerful frame, brandishing a sword and buckler which he had won from the Christians, defied his enemies to meet him in single fight. A young page of Cortés', named Nuñez, obtained his master's permission to accept the vaunting challenge of the Aztec, and, springing on the *azotea*, succeeded, after a hard struggle, in discomfiting his antagonist, who fought at a disadvantage with weapons in which he was unpractised, and, running him through the body, brought off his spoils in triumph and laid them at the general's feet.¹⁹

The division of Cortés had now worked its way as far north as the great street of Tacuba, which opened a communication with Alvarado's camp, and near which stood the palace of Guatemozin. It was a spacious stone pile, that might well be

¹⁹ Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 282-284.—Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 22; lib. 2, cap. 2.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 140.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 28.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, p. 43.

called a fortress. Though deserted by its royal master, it was held by a strong body of Aztecs, who made a temporary defence, but of little avail against the battering enginerry of the besiegers. It was soon set on fire, and its crumbling walls were levelled in the dust, like those other stately edifices of the capital, the boast and admiration of the Aztecs, and some of the fairest fruits of their civilization. "It was a sad thing to witness their destruction," exclaims Cortés; "but it was part of our plan of operations, and we had no alternative."²⁰

These operations had consumed several weeks, so that it was now drawing towards the latter part of July. During this time the blockade had been maintained with the utmost rigor, and the wretched inhabitants were suffering all the extremities of famine. Some few stragglers were taken, from time to time, in the neighborhood of the Christian camp, whither they had wandered in search of food. They were kindly treated, by command of Cortés, who was in hopes to induce others to follow their example, and thus to afford a means of conciliating the inhabitants, which might open the way to their submission. But few were found willing to leave the shelter of the capital, and they preferred to take their chance with their suffering countrymen rather than trust themselves to the mercies of the besiegers.

From these few stragglers, however, the Span-

²⁰ "No se entendió sino en quemar, y hallar Casas, que era lástima cierto de lo ver; pero como no nos convenía hacer otra cosa, eramos forzado seguir aquella órden." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, p. 286.

iards heard a dismal tale of woe respecting the crowded population in the interior of the city. All the ordinary means of sustenance had long since failed, and they now supported life as they could, by means of such roots as they could dig from the earth, by gnawing the bark of trees, by feeding on the grass,—on anything, in short, however loathsome, that could allay the craving of appetite. Their only drink was the brackish water of the soil saturated with the salt lake.²¹ Under this unwholesome diet, and the diseases engendered by it, the population was gradually wasting away. Men sickened and died every day, in all the excruciating torments produced by hunger, and the wan and emaciated survivors seemed only to be waiting for their time.

The Spaniards had visible confirmation of all this as they penetrated deeper into the city and approached the district of Tlatelolco, now occupied by the besieged. They found the ground turned up in quest of roots and weeds, the trees stripped of their green stems, their foliage, and their bark. Troops of famished Indians flitted in the distance, gliding like ghosts among the scenes of their former residence. Dead bodies lay unburied in the streets and court-yards, or filled up the canals. It was a sure sign of the extremity of the Aztecs; for they held the burial of the dead as a solemn and

²¹ "No tenian agua dulce para beber, ni para de ninguna manera de comer; bebian del agua salada y hedionda, comian ratones y lagartijas, y cortezas de árboles, y otras cosas no comestibles; y de esta causa enfermáron muchos, y muriéron muchos." Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 39.—Also *Rel. Terc. de Cortés*, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.

imperative duty. In the early part of the siege they had religiously attended to it. In its later stages they were still careful to withdraw the dead from the public eye, by bringing their remains within the houses. But the number of these, and their own sufferings, had now so fearfully increased that they had grown indifferent to this, and they suffered their friends and their kinsmen to lie and moulder on the spot where they drew their last breath!²²

As the invaders entered the dwellings, a more appalling spectacle presented itself;—the floors covered with the prostrate forms of the miserable inmates, some in the agonies of death, others festering in their corruption; men, women, and children inhaling the poisonous atmosphere, and mingled promiscuously together; mothers with their infants in their arms perishing of hunger before their eyes, while they were unable to afford them the nourishment of nature; men crippled by their wounds, with their bodies frightfully mangled, vainly attempting to crawl away, as the enemy entered. Yet even in this state they scorned to ask for mercy, and glared on the invaders with the sullen ferocity of the wounded tiger that the hunts-

²² “Y es verdad y juro amen, que toda la laguna, y casas, y bacoas estauan llenas de cuerpos, y cabeças de hombres muertos, que yo no sé de que manera lo escriua.” (Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 156.) Clavigero considers that it was a scheme of the Mexicans to leave the dead unburied, in order that the stench might annoy and drive off the Spaniards. (Stor. del Messico, tom. iii. p. 231, nota.) But this policy would have operated much more to the detriment of the besieged than of the besiegers, whose presence in the capital was but transitory. It is much more natural to refer it to the same cause which has led to a similar conduct under similar circumstances elsewhere, whether occasioned by pestilence or famine.

men have tracked to his forest cave. The Spanish commander issued strict orders that mercy should be shown to these poor and disabled victims. But the Indian allies made no distinction. An Aztec, under whatever circumstances, was an enemy; and, with hideous shouts of triumph, they pulled down the burning buildings on their heads, consuming the living and the dead in one common funeral pile!

Yet the sufferings of the Aztecs, terrible as they were, did not incline them to submission. There were many, indeed, who, from greater strength of constitution, or from the more favorable circumstances in which they were placed, still showed all their wonted energy of body and mind, and maintained the same undaunted and resolute demeanor as before. They fiercely rejected all the overtures of Cortés, declaring they would rather die than surrender, and adding, with a bitter tone of exultation, that the invaders would be at least disappointed in their expectations of treasure, for it was buried where they could never find it!²³

The women, it is said, shared in this desperate—it should rather be called heroic—spirit. They were indefatigable in nursing the sick and dressing their wounds; they aided the warriors in battle, by supplying them with the Indian ammunition of stones and arrows, prepared their slings, strung their bows, and displayed, in short, all the constancy and courage shown by the noble maidens of

²³ Gonzalo de las Casas, *Defensa*, MS., cap. 28.—*Martyr*, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 5, cap. 8.—Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Españoles*, p. 45.—*Rel. Terc. de Cortés*, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 29.

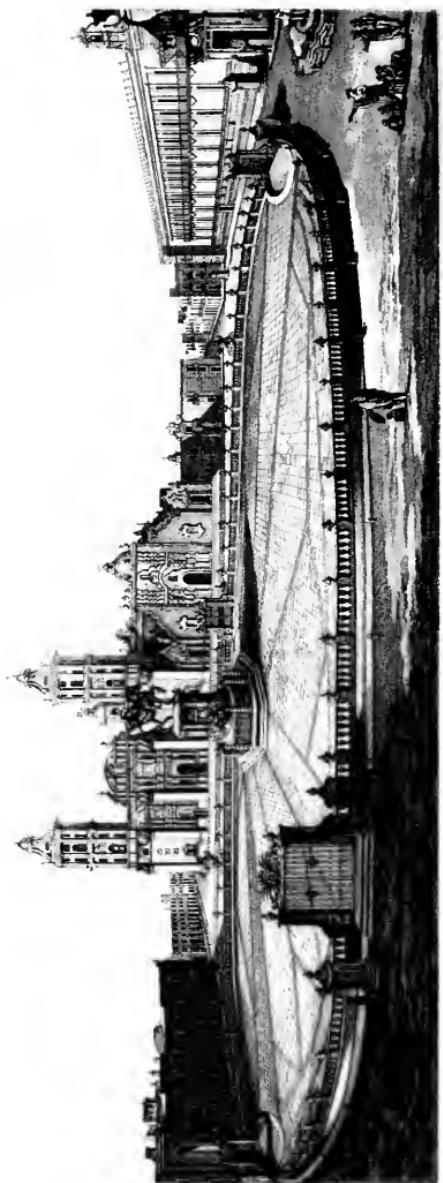
Saragossa in our day, and by those of Carthage in the days of antiquity.²⁴

Cortés had now entered one of the great avenues leading to the market-place of Tlatelolco, the quarter towards which the movements of Alvarado were also directed. A single canal only lay in his way; but this was of great width and stoutly defended by the Mexican archery. At this crisis, the army one evening, while in their intrenchments on the causeway, were surprised by an uncommon light that arose from the huge *teocalli* in that part of the city which, being at the north, was the most distant from their own position. This temple, dedicated to the dread war-god, was inferior only to the pyramid in the great square; and on it the Spaniards had more than once seen their unhappy countrymen led to slaughter. They now supposed that the enemy were employed in some of their diabolical ceremonies,—when the flame, mounting higher and higher, showed that the sanctuaries themselves were on fire. A shout of exultation at the sight broke forth from the assembled soldiers, as they assured one another that their countrymen under Alvarado had got possession of the building.

It was indeed true. That gallant officer, whose position on the western causeway placed him near the district of Tlatelolco, had obeyed his command-

²⁴ “Muchas cosas acaeciérón en este cerco, que entre otras generaciones estobieran discantadas é tenidas en mucho, en especial de las Mugeres de Temixtitán, de quien ninguna mención se ha hecho. Y soy certificado, que fué cosa maravillosa y para espantar, ver la prontitud y constancia que tobiérón en servir á sus maridos, y en curar los heridos, é en el labrar de las piedras para los que tiraban con hondas, é en otros oficios para mas que mugeres.” Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.





er's instructions to the letter, razing every building to the ground in his progress, and filling up the ditches with their ruins. He at length found himself before the great *teocalli* in the neighborhood of the market. He ordered a company, under a cavalier named Gutierre de Badajoz, to storm the place, which was defended by a body of warriors, mingled with priests, still more wild and ferocious than the soldiery. The garrison, rushing down the winding terraces, fell on the assailants with such fury as compelled them to retreat in confusion and with some loss. Alvarado ordered another detachment to their support. This last was engaged, at the moment, with a body of Aztecs, who hung on its rear as it wound up the galleries of the *teocalli*. Thus hemmed in between two enemies, above and below, the position of the Spaniards was critical. With sword and buckler, they plunged desperately on the ascending Mexicans, and drove them into the courtyard below, where Alvarado plied them with such lively volleys of musketry as soon threw them into disorder and compelled them to abandon the ground. Being thus rid of annoyance in the rear, the Spaniards returned to the charge. They drove the enemy up the heights of the pyramid, and, reaching the broad summit, a fierce encounter followed in mid-air,—such an encounter as takes place where death is the certain consequence of defeat. It ended, as usual, in the discomfiture of the Aztecs, who were either slaughtered on the spot still wet with the blood of their own victims, or pitched headlong down the sides of the pyramid.

The area was covered with the various symbols of the barbarous worship of the country, and with two lofty sanctuaries, before whose grinning idols were displayed the heads of several Christian captives who had been immolated on their altars. Although overgrown by their long, matted hair and bushy beards, the Spaniards could recognize, in the livid countenances, their comrades who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Tears fell from their eyes as they gazed on the melancholy spectacle and thought of the hideous death which their countrymen had suffered. They removed the sad relics with decent care, and after the Conquest deposited them in consecrated ground, on a spot since covered by the Church of the Martyrs.²⁵

They completed their work by firing the sanctuaries, that the place might be no more polluted by these abominable rites. The flame crept slowly up the lofty pinnacles, in which stone was mingled with wood, till at length, bursting into one bright blaze, it shot up its spiral volume to such a height that it was seen from the most distant quarters of the Valley. It was this which had been hailed by the soldiery of Cortés, and it served as the beacon-light to both friend and foe, intimating the progress of the Christian arms.

The commander-in-chief and his division, animated by the spectacle, made, in their entrance on the following day, more determined efforts to place themselves alongside of their companions

²⁵ Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 29.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 155.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 287-289.

under Alvarado. The broad canal, above noticed as the only impediment now lying in his way, was to be traversed; and on the farther side the emaciated figures of the Aztec warriors were gathered in numbers to dispute the passage, like the gloomy shades that wander—as ancient poets tell us—on the banks of the infernal river. They poured down, however, a storm of missiles, which were no shades, on the heads of the Indian laborers while occupied with filling up the wide gap with the ruins of the surrounding buildings. Still they toiled on in defiance of the arrowy shower, fresh numbers taking the place of those who fell. And when at length the work was completed, the cavalry rode over the rough plain at full charge against the enemy, followed by the deep array of spearmen, who bore down all opposition with their invincible phalanx.

The Spaniards now found themselves on the same ground with Alvarado's division. Soon afterwards, that chief, attended by several of his staff, rode into their lines, and cordially embraced his countrymen and companions in arms, for the first time since the beginning of the siege. They were now in the neighborhood of the market. Cortés, taking with him a few of his cavaliers, galloped into it. It was a vast enclosure, as the reader has already seen, covering many an acre.²⁶ Its dimen-

²⁶ *Ante*, vol. ii. p. 312.—The *tiangues* still continued of great dimensions, though with faded magnificence, after the Conquest, when it is thus noticed by Father Sahagun: “Entráron en la plaza ó *Tiangues* de esta Tlaltilulco (lugar muy espacioso mucho mas de lo que ahora es), el cual se podia llamar emporio de toda esta nueva España: al cual venian á tratar gentes de toda esta nueva España, y

sions were suited to the immense multitudes who gathered there from all parts of the Valley in the flourishing days of the Aztec monarchy. It was surrounded by porticoes and pavilions for the accommodation of the artisans and traders who there displayed their various fabrics and articles of merchandise. The flat roofs of the piazzas were now covered with crowds of men and women, who gazed in silent dismay on the steel-clad horsemen, that profaned these precincts with their presence for the first time since their expulsion from the capital. The multitude, composed for the most part, probably, of unarmed citizens, seemed taken by surprise; at least, they made no show of resistance; and the general, after leisurely viewing the ground, was permitted to ride back unmolested to the army.

On arriving there, he ascended the *teocalli*, from which the standard of Castile, supplanting the memorials of Aztec superstition, was now triumphantly floating. The Conqueror, as he strode among the smoking embers on the summit, calmly surveyed the scene of desolation below. The palaces, the temples, the busy marts of industry and trade, the glittering canals, covered with their rich freights from the surrounding country, the royal pomp of groves and gardens, all the splendors of the imperial city, the capital of the Western World, forever gone,—and in their place a barren wilderness! How different the spectacle which

aun de los Reinos á ella contiguos, y donde se vendian y compraban todas cuantas cosas hay en toda esta tierra, y en los Reinos de Quah-timalla y Xalisco (cosa cierto mucho de ver), yo lo ví por muchos años morando en esta Casa del Señor Santiago aunque ya no era tanto como antes de la Conquista." Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

the year before had met his eye, as it wandered over the same scenes from the heights of the neighboring *teocalli*, with Montezuma at his side! Seven-eighths of the city were laid in ruins, with the occasional exception, perhaps, of some colossal temple which it would have required too much time to demolish.²⁷ The remaining eighth, comprehending the district of Tlatelolco, was all that now remained to the Aztecs, whose population—still large after all its losses—was crowded into a compass that would hardly have afforded accommodations for a third of their numbers. It was the quarter lying between the great northern and western causeways, and is recognized in the modern capital as the *Barrio de San Jago* and its vicinity. It was the favorite residence of the Indians after the Conquest,²⁸ though at the present day thinly covered with humble dwellings, forming the straggling suburbs, as it were, of the metropolis. Yet it still affords some faint vestiges of what it was in its prouder days; and the curious antiquary, and occasionally the laborer, as he turns up the soil, encounters a glittering fragment of obsidian, or the mouldering head of a lance or arrow, or some other warlike relic, attesting that on this spot the retreating Aztecs made their last stand for the independence of their country.²⁹

²⁷ “É yo miré desde aquella Torre, lo que teníamos ganado de la Ciudad, que sin duda de ocho partes teníamos ganado las siete.” Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.

²⁸ Toribio, Hist. de los Ind., MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.—The remains of the ancient foundations may still be discerned in this quarter, while in every other *etiam périère ruinas!*

²⁹ Bustamante, the Mexican editor of Sahagun, mentions that he has now in his possession several of these military spoils. “Toda la llanura del Santuario de nuestra Señora de los Ángeles y de Santiago

On the day following, Cortés, at the head of his battalions, made a second entry into the great *tianguex*. But this time the Mexicans were better prepared for his coming. They were assembled in considerable force in the spacious square. A sharp encounter followed; but it was short. Their strength was not equal to their spirit, and they melted away before the rolling fire of musketry, and left the Spaniards masters of the enclosure.

The first act was to set fire to some temples, of no great size, within the market-place, or more probably on its borders. As the flames ascended, the Aztecs, horror-struck, broke forth into piteous lamentations at the destruction of the deities on whom they relied for protection.³⁰

The general's next step was at the suggestion of a soldier named Sotelo, a man who had served under the Great Captain in the Italian wars, where he professed to have gathered knowledge of the science of engineering, as it was then practised. He offered his services to construct a sort of catapult, a machine for discharging stones of great size, which might take the place of the regular battering-ram in demolishing the buildings. As the ammunition, notwithstanding the liberal supplies

Tlaltíolco se ve sembrada de fragmentos de lanzas cortantes, de mananas, y flechas de piedra obsidiana, de que usaban los Mexicanos ó sea Chinapos, y yo he recogido no pocos que conservo en mi poder.” Hist. de Nueva-España, lib. 12, nota 21.

³⁰ “Y como comenzó á arder, levantóse una llama tan alta que parecía llegar al cielo, al espectáculo de esta quema, todos los hombres y mugeres que se habían acogido á las tiendas que cercaban todo el Tianguex comenzaron á llorar á voz en grito, que fué cosa de espanto oírlos; porque quemado aquel delibro satánico luego entendieron que habían de ser del todo destruidos y robados.” Sahagún, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

which from time to time had found their way into the camp, now began to fail, Cortés eagerly acceded to a proposal so well suited to his exigencies. Timber and stone were furnished, and a number of hands were employed, under the direction of the self-styled engineer, in constructing the ponderous apparatus, which was erected on a solid platform of masonry, thirty paces square and seven or eight feet high, that covered the centre of the market-place. This was a work of the Aztec princes, and was used as a scaffolding on which mountebanks and jugglers might exhibit their marvellous feats for the amusement of the populace, who took great delight in these performances.³¹

The erection of the machine consumed several days, during which hostilities were suspended, while the artisans were protected from interruption by a strong corps of infantry. At length the work was completed; and the besieged, who with silent awe had beheld from the neighboring *azoteas* the progress of the mysterious engine which was to lay the remainder of their capital in ruins, now looked with terror for its operation. A stone of huge size was deposited on the timber. The machinery was set in motion; and the rocky fragment was discharged with a tremendous force from the catapult. But, instead of taking the direction of the Aztec buildings, it rose high and perpendicularly into the air, and, descending whence it

³¹ Vestiges of the work are still visible, according to M. de Humboldt, within the limits of the porch of the chapel of St. Jago. *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 44.

sprung, broke the ill-omened machine into splinters! It was a total failure.

The Aztecs were released from their apprehensions, and the soldiery made many a merry jest on the catastrophe, somewhat at the expense of their commander, who testified no little vexation at the disappointment, and still more at his own credulity.³²

³² Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 155.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 290.—Sahagun, *Hist de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

CHAPTER VIII

DREADFUL SUFFERINGS OF THE BESIEGED—SPIRIT OF GUATEMOZIN—MURDEROUS ASSAULTS—CAPTURE OF GUATEMOZIN—EVACUATION OF THE CITY—TERMINATION OF THE SIEGE—REFLECTIONS

1521

THREE was no occasion to resort to artificial means to precipitate the ruin of the Aztecs. It was accelerated every hour by causes more potent than those arising from mere human agency. There they were,—pent up in their close and suffocating quarters, nobles, commoners, and slaves, men, women, and children, some in houses, more frequently in hovels,—for this part of the city was not the best,—others in the open air in canoes, or in the streets, shivering in the cold rains of night, and scorched by the burning heat of day.¹ An old chronicler mentions the fact of two women of rank remaining three days and nights up to their necks

¹ “Estaban los tristes Mejicanos, hombres y mugeres, niños y niñas, viejos y viejas, heridos y enfermos, en un lugar bien estrecho, y bien apretados los unos con los otros, y con grandísima falta de bastimentos, y al calor del Sol, y al frío de la noche, y cada hora esperando la muerte.” Sahagún, Hist. de Nueva-España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 39.

in the water among the reeds, with only a handful of maize for their support.² The ordinary means of sustaining life were long since gone. They wandered about in search of anything, however unwholesome or revolting, that might mitigate the fierce gnawings of hunger. Some hunted for insects and worms on the borders of the lake, or gathered the salt weeds and moss from its bottom, while at times they might be seen casting a wistful look at the green hills beyond, which many of them had left to share the fate of their brethren in the capital.

To their credit, it is said by the Spanish writers that they were not driven, in their extremity, to violate the laws of nature by feeding on one another.³ But, unhappily, this is contradicted by the Indian authorities, who state that many a mother, in her agony, devoured the offspring which she had no longer the means of supporting. This is recorded of more than one siege in history; and it is the more probable here, where the sensibilities must have been blunted by familiarity with the brutal practices of the national superstition.⁴

² Torquemada had the anecdote from a nephew of one of the Indian matrons, then a very old man himself. *Monarch. Ind.*, lib. 4, cap. 102.

³ Torquemada, *Monarch. Ind.*, *ubi supra*.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 156.

⁴ “De los niños, no quedó nadie, que las mismas madres y padres los comian (que era gran lástima de ver, y mayormente de sufrir).” (Sahagún, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 39.) The historian derived his accounts from the Mexicans themselves, soon after the event.—One is reminded of the terrible denunciations of Moses: “The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward . . . her children which

But all was not sufficient, and hundreds of famished wretches died every day from extremity of suffering. Some dragged themselves into the houses, and drew their last breath alone and in silence. Others sank down in the public streets. Wherever they died, there they were left. There was no one to bury or to remove them. Familiarity with the spectacle made men indifferent to it. They looked on in dumb despair, waiting for their own turn. There was no complaint, no lamentation, but deep, unutterable woe.

If in other quarters of the town the corpses might be seen scattered over the streets, here they were gathered in heaps. "They lay so thick," says Bernal Diaz, "that one could not tread except among the bodies."⁵ "A man could not set his foot down," says Cortés, yet more strongly, "unless on the corpse of an Indian."⁶ They were piled one upon another, the living mingled with the dead. They stretched themselves on the bodies of their friends, and lay down to sleep there. Death was everywhere. The city was a vast charnel-house, in which all was hastening to decay and decomposition. A poisonous steam arose from the mass of putrefaction, under the action of alternate rain and heat, which so tainted the whole atmosphere that the Spaniards, including the gen-

she shall bear; for she shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." Deuteronomy, chap. 28, vs. 56, 57.

⁵ "No podíamos andar sino entre cuerpos, y cabezas de Indios muertos." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

⁶ "No tenían donde estar sino sobre los cuerpos muertos de los suyos." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 291.

eral himself, in their brief visits to the quarter, were made ill by it, and it bred a pestilence that swept off even greater numbers than the famine.⁷

Men's minds were unsettled by these strange and accumulated horrors. They resorted to all the superstitious rites prescribed by their religion, to stay the pestilence. They called on their priests to invoke the gods in their behalf. But the oracles were dumb, or gave only gloomy responses. Their deities had deserted them, and in their place they saw signs of celestial wrath, telling of still greater woes in reserve. Many, after the siege, declared that, among other prodigies, they beheld a stream of light, of a blood-red color, coming from the north in the direction of Tepejacac, with a rushing noise like that of a whirlwind, which swept round the district of Tlatelolco, darting out sparkles and flakes of fire, till it shot far into the centre of the lake!⁸ In the disordered state of their nerves, a mysterious fear took possession of their senses. Prodigies were of familiar occurrence, and the most familiar phenomena of nature were converted into prodigies.⁹ Stunned by their calamities,

⁷ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, ubi supra.—Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 8.—Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 41.—Gonzalo de las Casas, *Defensa*, MS., cap. 28.

⁸ “Un torbellino de fuego como sangre embuelto en brasas y en centellas, que partia de hacia Tepeacac (que es donde está ahora Santa María de Guadalupe) y fué haciendo gran ruido, hacia donde estaban acorralados los Mejicanos y Tlaltilulcanos; y dió una vuelta para enrededor de ellos, y no dicen si los empeció algo, sino que habiendo dado aquella vuelta, se entró por la laguna adelante; y allí desapareció.” Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 40.

⁹ “Inclinatis ad credendum animis,” says the philosophic Roman historian, “loco ominum etiam fortuita.” Tacitus, *Hist.*, lib. 2, sec. 1.

reason was bewildered, and they became the sport of the wildest and most superstitious fancies.

In the midst of these awful scenes, the young emperor of the Aztecs remained, according to all accounts, calm and courageous. With his fair capital laid in ruins before his eyes, his nobles and faithful subjects dying around him, his territory rent away, foot by foot, till scarce enough remained for him to stand on, he rejected every invitation to capitulate, and showed the same indomitable spirit as at the commencement of the siege. When Cortés, in the hope that the extremities of the besieged would incline them to listen to an accommodation, persuaded a noble prisoner to bear to Guatemozin his proposals to that effect, the fierce young monarch, according to the general, ordered him at once to be sacrificed.¹⁰ It is a Spaniard, we must remember, who tells the story.

Cortés, who had suspended hostilities for several days, in the vain hope that the distresses of the Mexicans would bend them to submission, now determined to drive them to it by a general assault. Cooped up as they were within a narrow quarter of the city, their position favored such an attempt. He commanded Alvarado to hold himself in readiness, and directed Sandoval—who, besides the causeway, had charge of the fleet, which lay off the Tlatelolcan district—to support the attack by a cannonade on the houses near the water. He then

¹⁰ "Y como lo lleváron delante de Guatimucin su Señor, y él le comenzó á hablar sobre la Paz, dizque luego lo mandó matar y sacrificar." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 293.

led his forces into the city, or rather across the horrid waste that now encircled it.

On entering the Indian precincts, he was met by several of the chiefs, who, stretching forth their emaciated arms, exclaimed, " You are the children of the Sun. But the Sun is swift in his course. Why are you, then, so tardy? Why do you delay so long to put an end to our miseries? Rather kill us at once, that we may go to our god **Huitzilopochtli**, who waits for us in heaven to give us rest from our sufferings!" ¹¹

Cortés was moved by their piteous appeal, and answered that he desired not their death, but their submission. " Why does your master refuse to treat with me," he said, " when a single hour will suffice for me to crush him and all his people?" He then urged them to request Guatemozin to confer with him, with the assurance that he might do it in safety, as his person should not be molested.

The nobles, after some persuasion, undertook the mission; and it was received by the young monarch in a manner which showed—if the anecdote before related of him be true—that misfortune had at length asserted some power over his haughty spirit. He consented to the interview, though not to have it take place on that day, but the following, in the great square of Tlatelolco. Cortés, well satisfied,

¹¹ "Que pues ellos me tenian por Hijo del Sol, y el Sol en tanta brevedad como era en un dia y una noche daba vuelta á todo el Mundo, que porque yo assí brevemente no los aeababa de matar, y los quitaba de penar tanto, porque ya ellos tenian deseos de morir, y irse al Cielo para su Ochilobus [Huitzilopochtli], que los estaba esperando para descansar." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 292.

immediately withdrew from the city and resumed his position on the causeway.

The next morning he presented himself at the place appointed, having previously stationed Alvarado there with a strong corps of infantry, to guard against treachery. The stone platform in the centre of the square was covered with mats and carpets, and a banquet was prepared to refresh the famished monarch and his nobles. Having made these arrangements, he awaited the hour of the interview.

But Guatemozin, instead of appearing himself, sent his nobles, the same who had brought to him the general's invitation, and who now excused their master's absence on the plea of illness. Cortés, though disappointed, gave a courteous reception to the envoys, considering that it might still afford the means of opening a communication with the emperor. He persuaded them, without much entreaty, to partake of the good cheer spread before them, which they did with a voracity that told how severe had been their abstinence. He then dismissed them with a seasonable supply of provisions for their master, pressing him to consent to an interview, without which it was impossible their differences could be adjusted.

The Indian envoys returned in a short time, bearing with them a present of fine cotton fabrics, of no great value, from Guatemozin, who still declined to meet the Spanish general. Cortés, though deeply chagrined, was unwilling to give up the point. "He will surely come," he said to the envoys, "when he sees that I suffer you to go and

come unharmed, you who have been my steady enemies, no less than himself, throughout the war. He has nothing to fear from me.”¹² He again parted with them, promising to receive their answer the following day.

On the next morning the Aztec chiefs, entering the Christian quarters, announced to Cortés that Guatemozin would confer with him at noon in the market-place. The general was punctual at the hour; but without success. Neither monarch nor ministers appeared there. It was plain that the Indian prince did not care to trust the promises of his enemy. A thought of Montezuma may have passed across his mind. After he had waited three hours, the general’s patience was exhausted, and, as he learned that the Mexicans were busy in preparations for defence, he made immediate dispositions for the assault.¹³

The confederates had been left without the walls; for he did not care to bring them within sight of the quarry before he was ready to slip the leash. He now ordered them to join him, and, supported by Alvarado’s division, marched at once into the enemy’s quarters. He found them prepared

¹² “Y yo les torné á repetir, que no sabia la causa, porque él se recelaba venir ante mí, pues veia que á ellos, que yo sabia q̄ habian sido los causadores principales de la Guerra, y que la habian sustentado, les hacia buen tratamiento, que los dejaba ir, y venir seguramente, sin recibir enojo alguno; que les rogaba, que le tornassen á hablar, y mirassen mucho en esto de su venida, pues á él le convenia, y yo lo hacia por su provecho.” Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 294, 295.

¹³ The testimony is most emphatic and unequivocal to these repeated efforts on the part of Cortés to bring the Aztecs peaceably to terms. Besides his own Letter to the emperor, see Bernal Diaz, cap. 155,—Herrera, Hist. general, lib. 2, cap. 6, 7,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 100,—Ixtilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, pp. 44—48,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 29, 30.

to receive him. Their most able-bodied warriors were thrown into the van, covering their feeble and crippled comrades. Women were seen occasionally mingling in the ranks, and, as well as children, thronged the *azoteas*, where, with famine-stricken visages and haggard eyes, they scowled defiance and hatred on their invaders.

As the Spaniards advanced, the Mexicans set up a fierce war-cry, and sent off clouds of arrows with their accustomed spirit, while the women and boys rained down darts and stones from their elevated position on the terraces. But the missiles were sent by hands too feeble to do much damage; and, when the squadrons closed, the loss of strength became still more sensible in the Aztecs. Their blows fell feebly and with doubtful aim, though some, it is true, of stronger constitution, or gathering strength from despair, maintained to the last a desperate fight.

The arquebusiers now poured in a deadly fire. The brigantines replied by successive volleys, in the opposite quarter. The besieged, hemmed in, like deer surrounded by the huntsmen, were brought down on every side. The carnage was horrible. The ground was heaped up with slain, until the maddened combatants were obliged to climb over the human mounds to get at one another. The miry soil was saturated with blood, which ran off like water and dyed the canals themselves with crimson.¹⁴ All was uproar and terrible confusion.

¹⁴ "Corrian Arroios de Sangre por las Calles, como pueden correr de Agua, quando llueve, y con ímpetu, y fuerça." *Torquemada, Monarch. Ind.*, lib. 4, cap. 103.

The hideous yells of the barbarians, the oaths and execrations of the Spaniards, the cries of the wounded, the shrieks of women and children, the heavy blows of the Conquerors, the death-struggle of their victims, the rapid, reverberating echoes of musketry, the hissing of innumerable missiles, the crash and crackling of blazing buildings, crushing hundreds in their ruins, the blinding volumes of dust and sulphurous smoke shrouding all in their gloomy canopy, made a scene appalling even to the soldiers of Cortés, steeled as they were by many a rough passage of war, and by long familiarity with blood and violence. "The piteous cries of the women and children, in particular," says the general, "were enough to break one's heart."¹⁵ He commanded that they should be spared, and that all who asked it should receive quarter. He particularly urged this on the confederates, and placed Spaniards among them to restrain their violence.¹⁶ But he had set an engine in motion too terrible to be controlled. It were as easy to curb the hurricane in its fury, as the passions of an infuriated horde of savages. "Never did I see so pitiless a race," he exclaims, "or anything wearing the

¹⁵ "Era tanta la grita, y lloro de los Niños, y Mugeres, que no habia Persona, á quien no quebrantasse el corazon." (Rel. Tere., ap. Lorenzana, p. 296.) They were a rash and stiff-necked race, exclaims his reverend editor, the archbishop, with a charitable commentary! "*Gens dura cervicis gens absque consilio.*" Nota.

¹⁶ "Como la gente de la Cibdad se salia á los nuestros, habia el general proveido, que por todas las calles estubiesen Espanoles para estorvar á los amigos, que no matasen aquellos tristes, que eran sin numero. É tambien dixo á todos los amigos capitanes, que no consintiesen á su gente que matasen á ninguno de los que salian." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.

form of man so destitute of humanity.”¹⁷ They made no distinction of sex or age, and in this hour of vengeance seemed to be requiting the hoarded wrongs of a century. At length, sated with slaughter, the Spanish commander sounded a retreat. It was full time, if, according to his own statement,—we may hope it is an exaggeration,—forty thousand souls had perished.¹⁸ Yet their fate was to be envied, in comparison with that of those who survived.

Through the long night which followed, no movement was perceptible in the Aztec quarter. No light was seen there, no sound was heard, save the low moaning of some wounded or dying wretch, writhing in his agony. All was dark and silent,—the darkness of the grave. The last blow seemed to have completely stunned them. They had parted with hope, and sat in sullen despair, like men waiting in silence the stroke of the executioner. Yet, for all this, they showed no disposition to submit. Every new injury had sunk deeper into their souls, and filled them with a deeper hatred of their enemy. Fortune, friends, kindred, home,—all were gone. They were content to throw away life itself, now that they had nothing more to live for.

Far different was the scene in the Christian camp, where, elated with their recent successes, all

¹⁷ “La qual残酷nunca en Generacion tan recia se vió, ni tan fuera de toda órden de naturaleza, como en los Naturales de estas partes.” Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 296.

¹⁸ Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl says, 50,000 were slain and taken in this dreadful onslaught. Venida de los Españos, p. 48.

was alive with bustle and preparation for the morrow. Bonfires were seen blazing along the causeways, lights gleamed from tents and barracks, and the sounds of music and merriment, borne over the waters, proclaimed the joy of the soldiers at the prospect of so soon terminating their wearisome campaign.

On the following morning the Spanish commander again mustered his forces, having decided to follow up the blow of the preceding day before the enemy should have time to rally, and at once to put an end to the war. He had arranged with Alvarado, on the evening previous, to occupy the market-place of Tlatelolco; and the discharge of an arquebuse was to be the signal for a simultaneous assault. Sandoval was to hold the northern causeway, and, with the fleet, to watch the movements of the Indian emperor, and to intercept the flight to the main land, which Cortés knew he meditated. To allow him to effect this would be to leave a formidable enemy in his own neighborhood, who might at any time kindle the flame of insurrection throughout the country. He ordered Sandoval, however, to do no harm to the royal person, and not to fire on the enemy at all, except in self-defence.¹⁹

It was the memorable thirteenth of August, 1521, the day of St. Hippolytus,—from this circumstance selected as the patron saint of modern

¹⁹ “Adonde estauan retraidos el Guatemuç con toda la flor de sus Capitanes, y personas mas nobles que en México ania, y le mandó que no matasse ni hiriese á ningunos Indios, saluo si no le diessen guerra, é que aunque se la diessen, que solamente se defendiesse.” Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

Mexico,—that Cortés led his warlike array for the last time across the black and blasted environs which lay around the Indian capital. On entering the Aztec precincts, he paused, willing to afford its wretched inmates one more chance of escape before striking the fatal blow. He obtained an interview with some of the principal chiefs, and expostulated with them on the conduct of their prince. "He surely will not," said the general, "see you all perish, when he can so easily save you." He then urged them to prevail on Guatemozin to hold a conference with him, repeating the assurances of his personal safety.

The messengers went on their mission, and soon returned with the *cihuacoatl* at their head, a magistrate of high authority among the Mexicans. He said, with a melancholy air, in which his own disappointment was visible, that "Guatemozin was ready to die where he was, but would hold no interview with the Spanish commander;" adding, in a tone of resignation, "it is for you to work your pleasure." "Go, then," replied the stern Conqueror, "and prepare your countrymen for death. Their hour is come."²⁰

He still postponed the assault for several hours. But the impatience of his troops at this delay was heightened by the rumor that Guatemozin and his nobles were preparing to escape with their effects

²⁰ "Y al fin me dijo, que en ninguna manera el Señor vernia ante mí; y antes queria por allá morir, y que á él pesaba mucho de esto, que hiciesse yo lo que quisiesse; y como ví en esto su determinacion, yo le dije; que se bolviesse á los suyos, y que él, y ellos se aparejassen, porque los queria combatir, y acabar de matar, y assí se fué." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 298.

in the *piraguas* and canoes which were moored on the margin of the lake. Convinced of the fruitlessness and impolicy of further procrastination, Cortés made his final dispositions for the attack, and took his own station on an *azotea* which commanded the theatre of operations.

*Followed
After*

When the assailants came into the presence of the enemy, they found them huddled together in the utmost confusion, all ages and sexes, in masses so dense that they nearly forced one another over the brink of the causeways into the water below. Some had climbed on the terraces, others feebly supported themselves against the walls of the buildings. Their squalid and tattered garments gave a wildness to their appearance which still further heightened the ferocity of their expression, as they glared on their enemy with eyes in which hate was mingled with despair. When the Spaniards had approached within bowshot, the Aztecs let off a flight of impotent missiles, showing to the last the resolute spirit, though they had lost the strength, of their better days. The fatal signal was then given by the discharge of an arquebuse,—speedily followed by peals of heavy ordnance, the rattle of firearms, and the hellish shouts of the confederates as they sprang upon their victims. It is unnecessary to stain the page with a repetition of the horrors of the preceding day. Some of the wretched Aztecs threw themselves into the water and were picked up by the canoes. Others sank and were suffocated in the canals. The number of these became so great that a bridge was made of their dead bodies, over which the assailants could climb to the oppo-

site banks. Others again, especially the women, begged for mercy, which, as the chroniclers assure us, was everywhere granted by the Spaniards, and, contrary to the instructions and entreaties of Cortés, everywhere refused by the confederates.²¹

While this work of butchery was going on, numbers were observed pushing off in the barks that lined the shore, and making the best of their way across the lake. They were constantly intercepted by the brigantines, which broke through the flimsy array of boats, sending off their volleys to the right and left, as the crews of the latter hotly assailed them. The battle raged as fiercely on the lake as on the land. Many of the Indian vessels were shattered and overturned. Some few, however, under cover of the smoke, which rolled darkly over the waters, succeeded in clearing themselves of the turmoil, and were fast nearing the opposite shore.

Sandoval had particularly charged his captains to keep an eye on the movements of any vessel in which it was at all probable that Guatemozin might be concealed. At this crisis, three or four of the largest *piraguas* were seen skimming over the water and making their way rapidly across the lake. A captain, named Garcí Holguín, who had command of one of the best sailors in the fleet, instantly gave them chase. The wind was favorable, and every moment he gained on the fugitives, who pulled their oars with a vigor that despair alone

²¹ Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.—Ixtilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, p. 48.—Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 7.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 297, 298.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 142.

could have given. But it was in vain; and, after a short race, Holguin, coming alongside of one of the *piraguas*, which, whether from its appearance or from information he had received, he conjectured might bear the Indian emperor, ordered his men to level their cross-bows at the boat. But, before they could discharge them, a cry arose from those in it that their lord was on board. At the same moment a young warrior, armed with buckler and *maquahuitl*, rose up, as if to beat off the assailants. But as the Spanish captain ordered his men not to shoot, he dropped his weapons, and exclaimed, "I am Guatemozin. Lead me to Malinche; I am his prisoner; but let no harm come to my wife and my followers."²²

Holguin assured him that his wishes should be respected, and assisted him to get on board the brigantine, followed by his wife and attendants. These were twenty in number, consisting of Coanaco, the deposed lord of Tezcuco, the lord of Tlacopan, and several other caciques and dignitaries, whose rank, probably, had secured them some exemption from the general calamities of the siege.

²² Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, p. 49.—"No me tiren, que yo soy el Rey de México, y desta tierra, y lo que te ruego es, que no me llegues á mi muger, ni á mis hijos; ni á ninguna muger, ni á ninguna cosa de lo que aquí traygo, sino que me tomes á mi, y me lleves á Malinche." (Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) M. de Humboldt has taken much pains to identify the place of Guatemozin's capture,—now become dry land,—which he considers to have been somewhere between the Garita de Peralvillo, the square of Santiago, Tlatelolco, and the bridge of Amaxac. Essai politique, tom. ii. p. 76.*

* [According to an old tradition, it was on the Puente del Cabildo, which is within the limits designated by Humboldt. Alaman, Conquista de Méjico (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 209, note.—K.]

When the captives were seated on the deck of his vessel, Holguin requested the Aztec prince to put an end to the combat by commanding his people in the other canoes to surrender. But, with a dejected air, he replied, "It is not necessary. They will fight no longer, when they see that their prince is taken." He spoke truth. The news of Guatemozin's capture spread rapidly through the fleet, and on shore, where the Mexicans were still engaged in conflict with their enemies. It ceased, however, at once. They made no further resistance; and those on the water quickly followed the brigantines, which conveyed their captive monarch to land. It seemed as if the fight had been maintained thus long the better to divert the enemy's attention and cover their master's retreat.²³

Meanwhile, Sandoval, on receiving tidings of the capture, brought his own brigantine alongside of Holguin's and demanded the royal prisoner to be surrendered to him. But the captain claimed him as his prize. A dispute arose between the parties, each anxious to have the glory of the deed, and perhaps the privilege of commemorating it on his escutcheon. The controversy continued so long that it reached the ears of Cortés, who, in his station on the *azotea*, had learned with no little satisfaction the capture of his enemy. He instantly sent orders to his wrangling officers to bring

²³ For the preceding account of the capture of Guatemozin, told with little discrepancy, though with more or less minuteness, by the different writers, see Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, ubi supra, —Rel. Terc. de Cortés, p. 299,—Gonzalo de las Casas, *Defensa*, MS.,—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 30,—Torquemada, *Monarch. Ind.*, lib. 4, cap. 101.

Guatemozin before him, that he might adjust the difference between them.²⁴ He charged them, at the same time, to treat their prisoner with respect. He then made preparations for the interview, caused the terrace to be carpeted with crimson cloth and matting, and a table to be spread with provisions, of which the unhappy Aztecs stood so much in need.²⁵ His lovely Indian mistress, Doña Marina, was present to act as interpreter. She had stood by his side through all the troubled scenes of the Conquest, and she was there now to witness its triumphant termination.

Guatemozin, on landing, was escorted by a company of infantry to the presence of the Spanish commander. He mounted the *azotea* with a calm and steady step, and was easily to be distinguished from his attendant nobles, though his full, dark eye was no longer lighted up with its accustomed fire, and his features wore an expression of passive resignation, that told little of the fierce and fiery spirit that burned within. His head was large, his limbs well proportioned, his complexion fairer than

²⁴ The general, according to Diaz, rebuked his officers for their ill-timed contention, reminding them of the direful effects of a similar quarrel between Marius and Sylla respecting Jugurtha. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) This piece of pedantry savors much more of the old chronicler than his commander. The result of the whole—not an uncommon one in such cases—was that the emperor granted to neither of the parties, but to Cortés, the exclusive right of commemorating the capture of Guatemozin on his escutcheon. He was permitted to bear three crowns of gold on a sable field, one above the other two, in token of his victory over the three lords of Mexico, Montezuma, his brother Cuitlahua, and Guatemozin. A copy of the instrument containing the grant of the arms of Cortés may be found in the “Disertaciones históricas” of Alaman, tom. ii. apénd. 2.

²⁵ Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva-España, lib. 12, cap. 40, MS.

that of his bronze-colored nation, and his whole deportment singularly mild and engaging.²⁶

Cortés came forward with a dignified and studied courtesy to receive him. The Aztec monarch probably knew the person of his conqueror,* for he first broke silence by saying, "I have done all that I could to defend myself and my people. I am now reduced to this state. You will deal with me, Malinche, as you list." Then, laying his hand on the hilt of a poniard stuck in the general's belt, he added, with vehemence, "Better despatch me with this, and rid me of life at once."²⁷ Cortés was filled with admiration at the proud bearing of the young barbarian, showing in his reverses a spirit worthy of an ancient Roman. "Fear not," he replied: "you shall be treated with all honor. You have defended your capital like a brave warrior. A Spaniard knows how to respect valor even in an

²⁶ For the portrait of Guatemozin I again borrow the faithful pencil of Diaz, who knew him—at least his person—well: "Guatemuz era de muy gentil disposicion, assí de cuerpo, como de fayciones, y la cata algo larga, y alegre, y los ojos mas parecian que quando miraua, que eran con grauedad, y halagüeños, y no auia falta en ellos, y era de edad de veinte y tres, ó veinte y quatro años, y el color tiraua mas á blanco, que al color, y matiz de essotros Indios morenos." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

²⁷ "Llegóse á mi, y dijome en su lengua: que ya él habia hecho todo, lo que de su parte era obligado para defenderse á sí, y á los suyos, hasta venir en aquel estado; que ahora ficiesse de él lo que yo quisiesse; y puso la mano en un puñal, que yo tenia, diciéndome, que le diesse de puñaladas, y le matasse." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 300.) This remarkable account by the Conqueror himself is confirmed by Diaz, who does not appear to have seen this letter of his commander. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

* [It was unnecessary to qualify the statement, as they had often seen each other at the court of Montezuma. Alaman, Conquista de Méjico (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 211, note.—K.]

enemy.”²⁸ He then inquired of him where he had left the princess his wife; and, being informed that she still remained under protection of a Spanish guard on board the brigantine, the general sent to have her escorted to his presence.

She was the youngest daughter of Montezuma, and was hardly yet on the verge of womanhood. On the accession of her cousin Guatemozin to the throne, she had been wedded to him as his lawful wife.²⁹ She is celebrated by her contemporaries for her personal charms; and the beautiful princess Tecuichpo is still commemorated by the Spaniards, since from her by a subsequent marriage are descended some of the illustrious families of their own nation.³⁰ She was kindly received by Cortés, who showed her the respectful attentions suited to her rank. Her birth, no doubt, gave her an additional interest in his eyes, and he may have felt some touch of compunction as he gazed on the daughter of the unfortunate Montezuma. He invited his royal captives to partake of the refreshments which their exhausted condition rendered so necessary. Meanwhile the Spanish commander made his dispositions for the night, ordering

²⁸ Ibid., cap. 156.—Also Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48,—and Martyr (De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 8), who, by the epithet of *magnanimo regi*, testifies the admiration which Guatemozin’s lofty spirit excited in the court of Castile.

²⁹ The ceremony of marriage, which distinguished the “lawful wife” from the concubine, is described by Don Thoan Cano, in his conversation with Oviedo. According to this, it appears that the only legitimate offspring which Montezuma left at his death was a son and a daughter, this same princess.—See Appendix, No. 11.

³⁰ For a further account of Montezuma’s daughter, see Book VII., chapter iii. of this History.

Sandoval to escort the prisoners to Cojohuacan, whither he proposed himself immediately to follow. The other captains, Olid and Alvarado, were to draw off their forces to their respective quarters. It was impossible for them to continue in the capital, where the poisonous effluvia from the unburied carcasses loaded the air with infection. A small guard only was stationed to keep order in the wasted suburbs. It was the hour of vespers when Guatemozin surrendered,³¹ and the siege might be considered as then concluded. The evening set in dark, and the rain began to fall before the several parties had evacuated the city.³²

³¹ The event is annually commemorated—or rather was, under the colonial government—by a solemn procession round the walls of the city. It took place on the 13th of August, the anniversary of the surrender, and consisted of the principal cavaliers and citizens on horseback, headed by the viceroy, and displaying the venerable standard of the Conqueror.*

³² Toribio, *Hist. de los Ind.*, MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.—Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 42.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 156.—“The lord of Mexico having surrendered,” says Cortés, in his letter to the emperor, “the war, by the blessing of Heaven, was brought to an end, on Wednesday, the 13th day of August, 1521. So that from the day when we first sat down before the city, which was the 30th of May, until its final occupation, seventy-five days elapsed.” (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 300.) It is not easy to tell what event occurred on May 30th to designate the beginning of the siege. Clavigero considers it the occupation of Cojohuacan by Olid. (*Stor. del Messico*, tom. iii. p. 196.) But I know not on what authority. Neither Bernal Diaz, nor Herrera, nor Cortés, so fixes the date. Indeed, Clavigero says that Alvarado and Olid left Tezcoco May 20th, while Cortés says May 10th. Perhaps Cortés dates from the time when Sandoval established himself on the northern causeway, and when the complete investment of the capital began. Bernal Diaz, more than once, speaks of the siege as lasting three months, computing, probably, from the time

*[It was the royal standard, not that of Cortés, which was carried on this occasion. The celebration was suppressed by a decree of the cortes of Cadiz in 1812. Alaman, *Conquista de Méjico*, trad. de Vega, tom. ii. p. 212, note.—K.]

During the night, a tremendous tempest, such as the Spaniards had rarely witnessed, and such as is known only within the tropics, burst over the Mexican Valley. The thunder, reverberating from the rocky amphitheatre of hills, bellowed over the waste of waters, and shook the *teocallis* and crazy tenements of Tenochtitlan—the few that yet survived—to their foundations. The lightning seemed to cleave asunder the vault of heaven, as its vivid flashes wrapped the whole scene in a ghastly glare, for a moment, to be again swallowed up in darkness. The war of elements was in unison with the fortunes of the ruined city. It seemed as if the deities of Anahuac, scared from their ancient abodes, were borne along shrieking and howling in the blast, as they abandoned the fallen capital to its fate!³³

On the day following the surrender, Guatemozin requested the Spanish commander to allow the Mexicans to leave the city and to pass unmolested into the open country. To this Cortés readily assented, as, indeed, without it he could take no steps for purifying the capital. He gave his orders, accordingly, for the evacuation of the place, commanding that no one, Spaniard or confederate, should offer violence to the Aztecs or in any way obstruct their departure. The whole

when his own division, under Alvarado, took up its position at Tacuba.

³³ It did not, apparently, disturb the slumbers of the troops, who had been so much deafened by the incessant noises of the siege that, now these had ceased, "we felt," says Diaz, in his homely way, "like men suddenly escaped from a belfry, where we had been shut up for months with a chime of bells ringing in our ears!" Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.

number of these is variously estimated at from thirty to seventy thousand, besides women and children, who had survived the sword, pestilence, and famine.³⁴ It is certain they were three days in defiling along the several causeways,—a mournful train;³⁵ husbands and wives, parents and children, the sick and the wounded, leaning on one another for support, as they feebly tottered along, squalid, and but half covered with rags, that disclosed at every step hideous gashes, some recently received, others festering from long neglect, and carrying with them an atmosphere of contagion. Their wasted forms and famine-stricken faces told the whole history of the siege; and, as the straggling files gained the opposite shore, they were observed to pause from time to time, as if to take one more look at the spot so lately crowned by the imperial city, once their pleasant home, and endeared to them by many a glorious recollection.

On the departure of the inhabitants, measures were immediately taken to purify the place, by means of numerous fires kept burning day and night, especially in the infected quarter of Tlate-

³⁴ Herrera (*Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 7) and Torquemada (*Monarch. Ind.*, lib. 4, cap. 101) estimate them at 30,000. Ixtlilxochitl says that 60,000 fighting-men laid down their arms (*Venida de los Españoles*, p. 49); and Oviedo swells the amount still higher, to 70,000. (*Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.)—After the losses of the siege, these numbers are startling.*

³⁵ “Digo que en tres días con sus noches iban todas tres calçadas llenas de Indios, é Indias, y muchachos, llenas de bote en bote, que nunca dexauan de salir, y tan flacos, y suzios, é amarillos, é hediondos, que era lástima de los ver.” Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 150.

* [And entirely untrustworthy, as are almost all of the estimates, made by the Conqueror, of the native inhabitants or warriors.—M.]

lolco, and by collecting the heaps of dead, which lay mouldering in the streets, and consigning them to the earth. Of the whole number who perished in the course of the siege it is impossible to form any probable computation. The accounts range widely, from one hundred and twenty thousand, the lowest estimate, to two hundred and forty thousand.³⁶ The number of the Spaniards who fell was comparatively small, but that of the allies must have been large if the historian of Tezcuco is correct in asserting that thirty thousand perished of his own countrymen alone.³⁷ That the number of those destroyed within the city was immense cannot be doubted, when we consider that besides its own redundant population, it was thronged with that of the neighboring towns, who, distrusting

³⁶ Cortés estimates the losses of the enemy in the three several assaults at 67,000, which with 50,000 whom he reckons to have perished from famine and disease would give 117,000. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 298, et alibi.) But this is exclusive of those who fell previously to the commencement of the vigorous plan of operations for demolishing the city. Ixtlilxochitl, who seldom allows any one to beat him in figures, puts the dead, in round numbers, at 240,000, comprehending the flower of the Aztec nobility. (Venida de los Españoles, p. 51.) Bernal Diaz observes, more generally, "I have read the story of the destruction of Jerusalem, but I doubt if there was as great mortality there as in this siege; for there was assembled in the city an immense number of Indian warriors from all the provinces and towns subject to Mexico, the most of whom perished." (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) "I have conversed," says Oviedo, "with many hidalgos and other persons, and have heard them say that the number of the dead was incalculable,—greater than that at Jerusalem, as described by Josephus." (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 30, cap. 30.) As the estimate of the Jewish historian amounts to 1,100,000 (Antiquities of the Jews, Eng. trans., book vii. chap. xvii.), the comparison may stagger the most accommodating faith. It will be safer to dispense with arithmetic where the data are too loose and slippery to afford a foothold for getting at truth.

³⁷ Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Españoles, p. 51.

their strength to resist the enemy, sought protection within its walls.

The booty found there—that is, the treasures of gold and jewels, the only booty of much value in the eyes of the Spaniards—fell far below their expectations. It did not exceed, according to the general's statement, a hundred and thirty thousand *castellanos* of gold, including the sovereign's share, which, indeed, taking into account many articles of curious and costly workmanship, voluntarily relinquished by the army, greatly exceeded his legitimate fifth.³⁸ Yet the Aztecs must have been in possession of a much larger treasure, if it were only the wreck of that recovered from the Spaniards on the night of the memorable flight from Mexico. Some of the spoil may have been sent away from the capital, some spent in preparations of defence, and more of it buried in the earth, or sunk in the water of the lake. Their menaces were not without a meaning. They had, at least, the satisfaction of disappointing the avarice of their enemies.

Cortés had no further occasion for the presence of his Indian allies. He assembled the chiefs of the different squadrons, thanked them for their services, noticed their valor in flattering terms, and, after distributing presents among them, with the assurance that his master the emperor would recompense their fidelity yet more largely, dismissed them to their own homes. They carried off a liberal share of the spoils of which they had plun-

³⁸ Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 301.—Oviedo goes into some further particulars respecting the amount of the treasure, and especially of the imperial fifth, to which I shall have occasion to advert hereafter. Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 31.

dered the dwellings,—not of a kind to excite the cupidity of the Spaniards,—and returned in triumph, short-sighted triumph! at the success of their expedition and the downfall of the Aztec dynasty.

Great, also, was the satisfaction of the Spaniards at this brilliant termination of their long and laborious campaign. They were, indeed, disappointed at the small amount of treasure found in the conquered city. But the soldier is usually too much absorbed in the present to give much heed to the future; and, though their discontent showed itself afterwards in a more clamorous form, they now thought only of their triumph, and abandoned themselves to jubilee. Cortés celebrated the event by a banquet, as sumptuous as circumstances would permit, to which all the cavaliers and officers were invited. Loud and long was their revelry, which was carried to such an excess as provoked the animadversion of Father Olmedo, who intimated that this was not the fitting way to testify their sense of the favors shown them by the Almighty. Cortés admitted the justice of the rebuke, but craved some indulgence for a soldier's license in the hour of victory. The following day was appointed for the commemoration of their successes in a more suitable manner.

A procession of the whole army was then formed, with Father Olmedo at its head. The soiled and tattered banners of Castile, which had waved over many a field of battle, now threw their shadows on the peaceful array of the soldiery, as they slowly moved along, rehearsing the litany,

and displaying the image of the Virgin and the blessed symbol of man's redemption. The reverend father pronounced a discourse, in which he briefly reminded the troops of their great cause for thankfulness to Providence for conducting them safe through their long and perilous pilgrimage; and, dwelling on the responsibility incurred by their present position, he besought them not to abuse the rights of conquest, but to treat the unfortunate Indians with humanity. The sacrament was then administered to the commander-in-chief and the principal cavaliers, and the services concluded with a solemn thanksgiving to the God of battles, who had enabled them to carry the banner of the Cross triumphant over this barbaric empire.³⁹

Thus, after a siege of nearly three months' duration, unmatched in history for the constancy and courage of the besieged, seldom surpassed for the severity of its sufferings, fell the renowned capital of the Aztecs. Unmatched, it may be truly said, for constancy and courage, when we recollect that the door of capitulation on the most honorable terms was left open to them throughout the whole blockade, and that, sternly rejecting every proposal of their enemy, they, to a man, preferred to die rather than surrender. More than three centuries had elapsed since the Aztecs, a poor and wandering tribe from the far Northwest, had come on the plateau. There they built their miserable col-

³⁹ Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 8.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 156.—Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, MS., lib. 12, cap. 42.—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.—Ixtlilxochitl, *Venida de los Españoles*, pp. 51, 52.

lection of huts on the spot—as tradition tells us—prescribed by the oracle. Their conquests, at first confined to their immediate neighborhood, gradually covered the Valley, then, crossing the mountains, swept over the broad extent of the table-land, descended its precipitous sides, and rolled onwards to the Mexican Gulf and the distant confines of Central America. Their wretched capital, meanwhile, keeping pace with the enlargement of territory, had grown into a flourishing city, filled with buildings, monuments of art, and a numerous population, that gave it the first rank among the capitals of the Western World. At this crisis came over another race from the remote East, strangers like themselves, whose coming had also been predicted by the oracle, and, appearing on the plateau, assailed them in the very zenith of their prosperity, and blotted them out from the map of nations forever! The whole story has the air of fable rather than of history! a legend of romance,—a tale of the genii!

Yet we cannot regret the fall of an empire which did so little to promote the happiness of its subjects or the real interests of humanity. Notwithstanding the lustre thrown over its latter days by the glorious defence of its capital, by the mild munificence of Montezuma, by the dauntless heroism of Guatemozin, the Aztees were emphatically a fierce and brutal race, little calculated, in their best aspects, to excite our sympathy and regard. Their civilization, such as it was, was not their own, but reflected, perhaps imperfectly, from a race whom they had succeeded in the land. It was, in respect

to the Aztecs, a generous graft on a vicious stock, and could have brought no fruit to perfection. They ruled over their wide domains with a sword, instead of a sceptre. They did nothing to ameliorate the condition or in any way promote the progress of their vassals. Their vassals were serfs, used only to minister to their pleasure, held in awe by armed garrisons, ground to the dust by imposts in peace, by military conscriptions in war. They did not, like the Romans, whom they resembled in the nature of their conquests, extend the rights of citizenship to the conquered. They did not amalgamate them into one great nation, with common rights and interests. They held them as aliens,—even those who in the Valley were gathered round the very walls of the capital. The Aztec metropolis, the heart of the monarchy, had not a sympathy, not a pulsation, in common with the rest of the body politic. It was a stranger in its own land.

The Aztecs not only did not advance the condition of their vassals, but, morally speaking, they did much to degrade it. How can a nation where human sacrifices prevail, and especially when combined with cannibalism, further the march of civilization? How can the interests of humanity be consulted, where man is levelled to the rank of the brutes that perish? The influence of the Aztecs introduced their gloomy superstition into lands before unacquainted with it, or where, at least, it was not established in any great strength. The example of the capital was contagious. As the latter increased in opulence, the religious celebrations were conducted with still more terrible magnificence; in

the same manner as the gladiatorial shows of the Romans increased in pomp with the increasing splendor of the capital. Men became familiar with scenes of horror and the most loathsome abominations. Women and children—the whole nation—became familiar with and assisted at them. The heart was hardened, the manners were made ferocious, the feeble light of civilization, transmitted from a milder race, was growing fainter and fainter, as thousands and thousands of miserable victims, throughout the empire, were yearly fattened in its cages, sacrificed on its altars, dressed and served at its banquets! The whole land was converted into vast human shambles! The empire of the Aztecs did not fall before its time.

Whether these unparalleled outrages furnish a sufficient plea to the Spaniards for their invasion, whether, with the Protestant, we are content to find a warrant for it in the natural rights and demands of civilization, or, with the Roman Catholic, in the good pleasure of the Pope,—on the one or other of which grounds the conquests by most Christian nations in the East and the West have been defended,—it is unnecessary to discuss, as it has already been considered in a former chapter. It is more material to inquire whether, assuming the right, the conquest of Mexico was conducted with a proper regard to the claims of humanity. And here we must admit that, with all allowance for the ferocity of the age and the laxity of its principles, there are passages which every Spaniard who cherishes the fame of his countrymen would be glad to see expunged from their history; passages not to be

vindicated on the score of self-defence, or of necessity of any kind, and which must forever leave a dark spot on the annals of the Conquest. And yet, taken as a whole, the invasion, up to the capture of the capital, was conducted on principles less revolting to humanity than most, perhaps than any, of the other conquests of the Castilian crown in the New World.

It may seem slight praise to say that the followers of Cortés used no blood-hounds to hunt down their wretched victims, as in some other parts of the Continent, nor exterminated a peaceful and submissive population in mere wantonness of cruelty, as in the Islands. Yet it is something that they were not so far infected by the spirit of the age, and that their swords were rarely stained with blood unless it was indispensable to the success of their enterprise. Even in the last siege of the capital, the sufferings of the Aztecs, terrible as they were, do not imply any unusual cruelty in the victors; they were not greater than those inflicted on their own countrymen at home, in many a memorable instance, by the most polished nations, not merely of ancient times, but of our own. They were the inevitable consequences which follow from war when, instead of being confined to its legitimate field, it is brought home to the hearthstone, to the peaceful community of the city,—its burghers untrained to arms, its women and children yet more defenceless. In the present instance, indeed, the sufferings of the besieged were in a great degree to be charged on themselves,—on their patriotic but desperate self-devotion. It was not the desire, as certainly

it was not the interest, of the Spaniards to destroy the capital or its inhabitants. When any of these fell into their hands, they were kindly entertained, their wants supplied, and every means taken to infuse into them a spirit of conciliation; and this, too, it should be remembered, in despite of the dreadful doom to which they consigned their Christian captives. The gates of a fair capitulation were kept open, though unavailingly, to the last hour.

The right of conquest necessarily implies that of using whatever force may be necessary for overcoming resistance to the assertion of that right. For the Spaniards to have done otherwise than they did would have been to abandon the siege, and, with it, the conquest of the country. To have suffered the inhabitants, with their high-spirited monarch, to escape, would but have prolonged the miseries of war by transferring it to another and more inaccessible quarter. They literally, so far as the success of the expedition was concerned, had no choice. If our imagination is struck with the amount of suffering in this and in similar scenes of the Conquest, it should be borne in mind that it was a natural result of the great masses of men engaged in the conflict. The amount of suffering does not of itself show the amount of cruelty which caused it; and it is but justice to the Conquerors of Mexico to say that the very brilliancy and importance of their exploits have given a melancholy celebrity to their misdeeds, and thrown them into somewhat bolder relief than strictly belongs to them. It is proper that thus much should be stated, not to excuse their excesses, but that we may be enabled to

make a more impartial estimate of their conduct as compared with that of other nations under similar circumstances, and that we may not visit them with peculiar obloquy for evils which necessarily flow from the condition of war.⁴⁰ I have not drawn a veil over these evils; for the historian should not shrink from depicting in their true colors the atrocities of a condition over which success is apt to throw a false halo of glory, but which, bursting asunder the strong bonds of human fellowship, purchases its triumphs by arming the hand of man against his brother, makes a savage of the civilized, and kindles the fires of hell in the bosom of the savage.

Whatever may be thought of the Conquest in a moral view, regarded as a military achievement it must fill us with astonishment. That a handful of adventurers, indifferently armed and equipped, should have landed on the shores of a powerful empire inhabited by a fierce and warlike race, and, in defiance of the reiterated prohibitions of its sov-

⁴⁰ By none has this obloquy been poured with such unsparing hand on the heads of the old Conquerors as by their own descendants, the modern Mexicans. Ixtlilxochitl's editor, Bustamante, concludes an animated invective against the invaders with recommending that a monument should be raised on the spot—now dry land—where Guatemozin was taken, which, as the proposed inscription itself intimates, should “devote to eternal execration the detested memory of these banditti!” (Venida de los Españos, p. 52, nota.) One would suppose that the pure Aztec blood, uncontaminated by a drop of Castilian, flowed in the veins of the indignant editor and his compatriots, or at least that their sympathies for the conquered race would make them anxious to reinstate them in their ancient rights. Notwithstanding these bursts of generous indignation, however, which plentifully season the writings of the Mexicans of our day, we do not find that the Revolution, or any of its numerous brood of *pronunciamientos*, has resulted in restoring to them an acre of their ancient territory.

ereign, have forced their way into the interior;—that they should have done this without knowledge of the language or of the land, without chart or compass to guide them, without any idea of the difficulties they were to encounter, totally uncertain whether the next step might bring them on a hostile nation or on a desert, feeling their way along in the dark, as it were;—that, though nearly overwhelmed in their first encounter with the inhabitants, they should have still pressed on to the capital of the empire, and, having reached it, thrown themselves unhesitatingly into the midst of their enemies;—that, so far from being daunted by the extraordinary spectacle there exhibited of power and civilization, they should have been but the more confirmed in their original design;—that they should have seized the monarch, have executed his ministers before the eyes of his subjects, and, when driven forth with ruin from the gates, have gathered their scattered wreck together, and, after a system of operations pursued with consummate policy and daring, have succeeded in overturning the capital and establishing their sway over the country;—that all this should have been so effected by a mere handful of indigent adventurers, is a fact little short of the miraculous,—too startling for the probabilities demanded by fiction, and without a parallel in the pages of history.

Yet this must not be understood too literally; for it would be unjust to the Aztecs themselves, at least to their military prowess, to regard the Conquest as directly achieved by the Spaniards alone. This would indeed be to arm the latter with the charmed

shield of Ruggiero, and the magic lance of Astolfo, overturning its hundreds at a touch. The Indian empire was in a manner conquered by Indians. The first terrible encounter of the Spaniards with the Tlascalans, which had nearly proved their ruin, did in fact insure their success. It secured to them a strong native support on which to retreat in the hour of trouble, and round which they could rally the kindred races of the land for one great and overwhelming assault. The Aztec monarchy fell by the hands of its own subjects, under the direction of European sagacity and science. Had it been united, it might have bidden defiance to the invaders. As it was, the capital was dissevered from the rest of the country, and the bolt, which might have passed off comparatively harmless had the empire been cemented by a common principle of loyalty and patriotism, now found its way into every crack and crevice of the ill-compacted fabric and buried it in its own ruins. Its fate may serve as a striking proof that a government which does not rest on the sympathies of its subjects cannot long abide; that human institutions, when not connected with human prosperity and progress, must fall,—if not before the increasing light of civilization, by the hand of violence; by violence from within, if not from without. And who shall lament their fall?

With the events of this Book terminates the history, by Solís, of the *Conquista de Méjico*; a history, in many points of view, the most remarkable in the Castilian language. Don Antonio de Solís was born of a respectable family, in October, 1610, at Alcalá de Henares, the nursery of science, and the name of which is associated in Spain with the brightest ornaments of both church and state. Solís, while

very young, exhibited the sparks of future genius, especially in the vivacity of his imagination and a sensibility to the beautiful. He showed a decided turn for dramatic composition, and produced a comedy, at the age of seventeen, which would have reflected credit on a riper age. He afterwards devoted himself with assiduity to the study of ethics, the fruits of which are visible in the moral reflections which gave a didactic character to the lightest of his compositions.

At the usual age he entered the University of Salamanca, and went through the regular course of the canon and civil law. But the imaginative spirit of Solís took much more delight in the soft revels of the Muses than in the severe discipline of the schools; and he produced a number of pieces for the theatre, much esteemed for the richness of the diction and for the ingenious and delicate texture of the intrigue. His taste for dramatic composition was, no doubt, nourished by his intimacy with the great Calderon, for whose dramas he prepared several *loas*, or prologues. The amiable manners and brilliant acquisitions of Solís recommended him to the favor of the Conde de Oropesa, Viceroy of Navarre, who made him his secretary. The letters written by him while in the service of this nobleman, and afterwards, have some of them been given to the public, and are much commended for the suavity and elegance of expression characteristic of all the writings of their author.

The increasing reputation of Solís attracted the notice of the Court, and in 1661 he was made secretary to the queen dowager,—an office which he had declined under Philip the Fourth,—and he was also preferred to the still more important post of Historiographer of the Indies, an appointment which stimulated his ambition to a bold career, different from anything he had yet attempted. Five years after this event, at the age of fifty-six, he made a most important change in his way of life, by embracing the religious profession, and was admitted to priest's orders in 1666. From this time he discontinued his addresses to the comic Muse, and, if we may credit his biographers, even refused, from conscientious scruples, to engage in the composition of the religious dramas, styled *autos sacramentales*, although the field was now open to him by the death of the poet Calderon. But such tenderness of conscience it seems difficult to reconcile with the publication of his various comedies, which took place in 1681. It is certain, however, that he devoted himself zealously to his new profession, and to the historical studies in which his office of chronicler had engaged him. At length the fruits of these studies were given to the world in his *Conquista de Méjico*, which appeared at Madrid in 1684. He designed, it is said, to continue the work to the times after the Conquest. But, if so, he was unfortunately prevented by his death, which occurred about two years after the publication of his history, on the 13th of April, 1686. He died at the age of seventy-six, much regarded for his virtues and admired for his genius, but in that poverty with which genius and virtue are too often requited.

The miscellaneous poems of Solís were collected and published a few years after his death, in one volume quarto; which has since been reprinted. But his great work, that on which his fame is permanently to rest, is his *Conquista de Méjico*. Notwithstanding the field of history had been occupied by so many eminent Spanish scholars, there was still a new career open to Solís. His predecessors, with all their merits, had shown a strange ignorance of the principles of art. They had regarded historical writing not as a work of art, but as a science. They had approached it on that side only, and thus divorced it from its legitimate connection with *belles-lettres*. They had thought only of the useful, and nothing of the beautiful; had addressed themselves to the business of instruction, not to that of giving pleasure; to the man of letters, studious to hive up knowledge, not to the man of leisure, who turns to books as a solace or a recreation. Such writers are never in the hands of the many,—not even of the cultivated many. They are condemned to the closet of the student, painfully toiling after truth, and little mindful of the coarse covering under which she may be wrapped. Some of the most distinguished of the national historiographers, as, for example, Herrera and Zurita, two of the greatest names in Castile and Aragon, fall under this censure. They display acuteness, strength of argument, judicious criticism, wonderful patience and industry in accumulating details for their varied and voluminous compilations; but in all the graces of composition—in elegance of style, skilful arrangement of the story, and selection of incidents—they are lamentably deficient. With all their high merits, intellectually considered, they are so defective on the score of art that they can neither be popular, nor reverenced as the great classics of the nation.

Solís saw that the field was unappropriated by his predecessors, and had the address to avail himself of it. Instead of spreading himself over a vast range, where he must expend his efforts on cold and barren generalities, he fixed his attention on one great theme,—one that, by its picturesque accompaniments, the romantic incidents of the story, the adventurous character of the actors and their exploits, was associated with many a proud and patriotic feeling in the bosom of the Spaniard,—one, in fine, that, by the brilliant contrast it afforded of European civilization to the barbaric splendors of an Indian dynasty, was remarkably suited to the kindling imagination of the poet. It was accordingly under its poetic aspect that the eye of Solis surveyed it. He distributed the whole subject with admirable skill, keeping down the subordinate parts, bringing the most important into high relief, and by a careful study of its proportions giving an admirable symmetry to the whole. Instead of bewildering the attention by a variety of objects, he presented to it one great and predominant idea, which shed its light, if I may so say, over his whole work. Instead of the numerous episodes, leading, like so many blind galleries, to nothing, he took the student along a great road, conducting straight towards the mark.

At every step which we take in the narrative, we feel ourselves on the advance. The story never falters or stands still. That admirable *liaison* of the parts is maintained, by which one part is held to another, and each preceding event prepares the way for that which is to follow. Even those occasional interruptions, the great stumbling-block of the historian, which cannot be avoided, in consequence of the important bearing which the events that cause them have on the story, are managed with such address that, if the interest is suspended, it is never snapped. Such halting-places, indeed, are so contrived as to afford a repose not unwelcome after the stirring scenes in which the reader has been long involved; as the traveller, exhausted by the fatigues of his journey, finds refreshment at places which in their own character have little to recommend them.

The work, thus conducted, affords the interest of a grand spectacle,—of some well-ordered drama, in which scene succeeds to scene, act to act, each unfolding and preparing the mind for the one that is to follow, until the whole is consummated by the grand and decisive *dénouement*. With this *dénouement*, the fall of Mexico, Solís has closed his history, preferring to leave the full impression unbroken on the reader's mind rather than to weaken it by prolonging the narrative to the Conqueror's death. In this he certainly consulted effect.

Solís used the same care in regard to style that he showed in the arrangement of his story. It is elaborated with the nicest art, and displays that varied beauty and brilliancy which remind us of those finely variegated woods which, under a high polish, display all the rich tints that lie beneath the surface. Yet this style finds little favor with foreign critics, who are apt to condemn it as tumid, artificial, and verbose. But let the foreign critic beware how he meddles with style, that impalpable essence which surrounds thought as with an atmosphere, giving to it its life and peculiar tone of color, differing in different nations, like the atmospheres which envelop the different planets of our system, and which require to be comprehended that we may interpret the character of the objects seen through their medium. None but a native can pronounce with any confidence upon style, affected as it is by so many casual and local associations that determine its propriety and its elegance. In the judgment of eminent Spanish critics, the style of Solís claims the merits of perspicuity, copiousness, and classic elegance. Even the foreigner will not be insensible to its power of conveying a living picture to the eye. Words are the colors of the writer, and Solís uses them with the skill of a consummate artist; now displaying the dark tumult of battle, and now refreshing the mind by scenes of quiet magnificence or of soft luxury and repose.

Solís formed himself to some extent on the historical models of antiquity. He introduced set speeches into the mouths of his personages, speeches of his own composing. The practice may claim high authority among moderns as well as ancients, especially among the

great Italian historians. It has its advantages, in enabling the writer to convey in a dramatic form the sentiments of the actors, and thus to maintain the charm of historic illusion by never introducing the person of the historian. It has also another advantage, that of exhibiting the author's own sentiments under cover of his hero's,—a more effective mode than if they were introduced as his own. But to one trained in the school of the great English historians the practice has something in it unsatisfactory and displeasing. There is something like deception in it. The reader is unable to determine what are the sentiments of the characters and what those of the author. History assumes the air of romance, and the bewildered student wanders about in an uncertain light, doubtful whether he is treading on fact or fiction.

It is open to another objection, when, as it frequently does, it violates the propriety of costume. Nothing is more difficult than to preserve the keeping of the piece when the new is thus laid on the old,—the imitation of the antique on the antique itself. The declamations of Solís are much prized as specimens of eloquence. But they are too often misplaced; and the rude characters in whose mouths they are inserted are as little in keeping with them as were the Roman heroes with the fashionable wig and sword with which they strutted on the French stage in Louis the Fourteenth's time.

As to the value of the researches made by Solís in the compilation of his work it is not easy to speak, for the page is supported by none of the notes and references which enable us to track the modern author to the quarry whence he has drawn his materials. It was not the usage of the age. The people of that day, and, indeed, of preceding times, were content to take the author's word for his facts. They did not require to know why he affirmed this thing or doubted that; whether he built his story on the authority of a friend or of a foe, of a writer of good report or of evil report. In short, they did not demand a reason for their faith. They were content to take it on trust. This was very comfortable to the historian. It saved him a world of trouble in the process, and it prevented the detection of error, or, at least, of negligence. It prevented it with all who did not carefully go over the same ground with himself. They who have occasion to do this with Solís will probably rise from the examination with no very favorable idea of the extent of his researches; they will find that, though his situation gave him access to the most valuable repositories in the kingdom, he rarely ascends to original documents, but contents himself with the most obvious and accessible; that he rarely discriminates between the contemporary testimony and that of later date; in a word, that in all that constitutes the *scientific* value of history he falls far below his learned predecessor Herrera,—rapid as was the composition of this last.

Another objection that may be made to Solís is his bigotry, or rather his fanaticism. This defect, so repugnant to the philosophic spirit which should preside over the labors of the historian, he pos-

sessed, it is true, in common with many of his countrymen. But in him it was carried to an uncommon height; and it was peculiarly unfortunate, since his subject, being the contest between the Christian and the Infidel, naturally drew forth the full display of this failing. Instead of regarding the benighted heathen with the usual measure of aversion in which they were held in the Peninsula after the subjugation of Granada, he considered them as part of the grand confederacy of Satan, not merely breathing the spirit and acting under the invisible influence of the Prince of Darkness, but holding personal communication with him. He seems to have regarded them, in short, as his regular and organized militia. In this view, every act of the unfortunate enemy was a crime. Even good acts were misrepresented, or referred to evil motives; for how could goodness originate with the Spirit of Evil? No better evidence of the results of this way of thinking need be given than that afforded by the ill-favored and unauthorized portrait which the historian has left us of Montezuma,—even in his dying hours. The war of the Conquest was, in short, in the historian's eye, a conflict between light and darkness, between the good principle and the evil principle, between the soldiers of Satan and the chivalry of the Cross. It was a Holy War, in which the sanctity of the cause covered up the sins of the Conquerors, and every one—the meanest soldier who fell in it—might aspire to the crown of martyrdom. With sympathies thus preoccupied, what room was there for that impartial criticism which is the life of history?

The historian's overweening partiality to the Conquerors is still further heightened by those feelings of patriotism—a bastard patriotism—which, identifying the writer's own glory with that of his countrymen, makes him blind to their errors. This partiality is especially shown in regard to Cortés, the hero of the piece. The lights and shadows of the picture are all disposed with reference to this principal character. The good is ostentatiously paraded before us, and the bad is winked out of sight. Solís does not stop here, but, by the artful gloss which makes the worse appear the better cause, he calls on us to admire his hero sometimes for his very transgressions. No one, not even Gomara himself, is such a wholesale encomiast of the great Conqueror; and, when his views are contradicted by the statements of honest Diaz, Solís is sure to find a motive for the discrepancy in some sinister purpose of the veteran. He knows more of Cortés, of his actions and his motives, than his companion in arms or his admiring chaplain.

In this way Solís has presented a beautiful image of his hero,—but it is a hero of romance; a character without a blemish. An eminent Castilian critic has commended him for “having conducted his history with so much art that it has become a panegyric.” This may be true; but, if history be panegyric, panegyric is not history.

Yet, with all these defects,—the existence of which no candid critic will be disposed to deny,—the History of Solís has found such favor

with his own countrymen that it has been printed and reprinted, with all the refinements of editorial luxury. It has been translated into the principal languages of Europe; and such is the charm of its composition, and its exquisite finish as a work of art, that it will doubtless be as imperishable as the language in which it is written, or the memory of the events which it records.

At this place also we are to take leave of Father Sahagun, who has accompanied us through our narrative. As his information was collected from the traditions of the natives, the contemporaries of the Conquest, it has been of considerable importance in corroborating or contradicting the statements of the Conquerors. Yet its value in this respect is much impaired by the wild and random character of many of the Aztec traditions,—so absurd, indeed, as to carry their own refutation with them. Where the passions are enlisted, what is too absurd to find credit?

The Twelfth Book—as it would appear from his Preface, the Ninth Book originally—of his *Historia de la Nueva-España* is devoted to the account of the Conquest. In 1585, thirty years after the first draft, he re-wrote this part of his great work, moved to it, as he tells us, “by the desire to correct the defects of the first account, in which some things had found their way that had better been omitted, and other things omitted which were well deserving of record.”* It might be supposed that the obloquy which the missionary had brought on his head by his honest recital of the Aztec traditions would have made him more circumspect in this *rifacimento* of his former narrative. But I have not found it so, or that there has been any effort to mitigate the statements that bore hardest on his countrymen. As this manuscript copy must have been that which the author himself deemed the most correct, since it is his last revision, and as it is more copious than the printed narrative, I have been usually guided by it.

Señor Bustamante is mistaken in supposing that the edition of this Twelfth Book which he published in Mexico in 1829 is from the *reformed* copy of Sahagun. The manuscript cited in these pages is undoubtedly a transcript of that copy. For in the Preface to it, as we have seen, the author himself declares it. In the intrinsic value of the two drafts there is, after all, but little difference.

* “En el libro nono, donde se trata esta Conquista, se hicieron ciertos defectos; y fué, que algunas cosas se pusieron en la narracion de este Conquista que fueron mal puestas; y otras se callaron, que fueron mal calladas. Por esta causa, este año de mil quinientos ochenta y cinco, enmende este Libro.” MS.

BOOK VII

(CONCLUSION)

SUBSEQUENT CAREER OF CORTÉS

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CHAPTER I

TORTURE OF GUATEMOZIN—SUBMISSION OF THE COUNTRY—REBUILDING OF THE CAPITAL—MISSION TO CASTILE—COMPLAINTS AGAINST CORTÉS—HE IS CONFIRMED IN HIS AUTHORITY

1521-1522

THE history of the Conquest of Mexico terminates with the surrender of the capital. But the history of the Conquest is so intimately blended with that of the extraordinary man who achieved it, that there would seem to be an incompleteness in the narrative if it were not continued to the close of his personal career. This part of the subject has been very imperfectly treated by preceding writers. I shall therefore avail myself of the authentic materials in my possession to give a brief sketch of the brilliant but checkered fortunes which marked the subsequent career of Cortés.

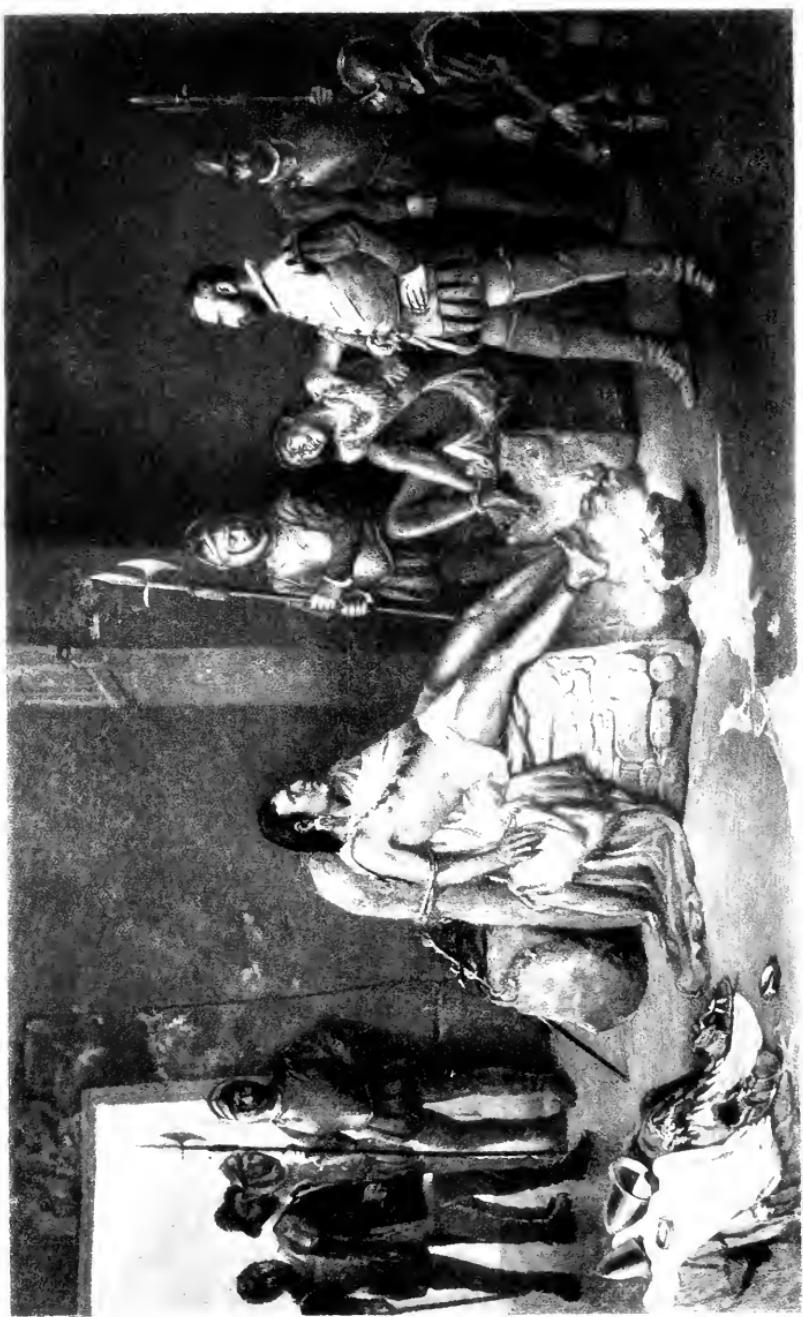
The first ebullition of triumph was succeeded in the army by very different feelings, as they beheld

the scanty spoil gleaned from the conquered city, and as they brooded over the inadequate compensation they were to receive for all their toils and sufferings. Some of the soldiers of Narvaez, with feelings of bitter disappointment, absolutely declined to accept their shares. Some murmured audibly against the general, and others against Guatemozin, who, they said, could reveal, if he chose, the place where the treasures were secreted. The white walls of the barracks were covered with epigrams and pasquinades levelled at Cortés, whom they accused of taking "one-fifth of the booty as commander-in-chief, and another fifth as king." As Guatemozin refused to make any revelation in respect to the treasure, or rather declared there was none to make, the soldiers loudly insisted on his being put to the torture. But for this act of violence, so contrary to the promise of protection recently made to the Indian prince, Cortés was not prepared; and he resisted the demand, until the men, instigated, it is said, by the royal treasurer, Alderete, accused the general of a secret understanding with Guatemozin, and of a design to defraud the Spanish sovereigns and themselves. These unmerited taunts stung Cortés to the quick, and in an evil hour he delivered the Aztec prince into the hands of his enemies, to work their pleasure on him.

But the hero who had braved death in its most awful forms was not to be intimidated by bodily suffering. When his companion, the cacique of Tacuba, who was put to the torture with him, testified his anguish by his groans, Guatemozin coldly



He takes the man
the booty as
"as king." The
relation in
that there was
a king on his
throne of vic-



rebuked him by exclaiming, “And do you think I, then, am taking my pleasure in my bath?”¹ At length Cortés, ashamed of the base part he was led to play, rescued the Aztec prince from his tormentors before it was too late,—not, however, before it was too late for his own honour, which has suffered an indelible stain from this treatment of his royal prisoner.

All that could be wrung from Guatemozin by the extremity of his sufferings was the confession that much gold had been thrown into the water. But, although the best divers were employed, under the eye of Cortés himself, to search the oozy bed of the lake, only a few articles of inconsiderable value were drawn from it. They had better fortune in searching a pond in Guatemozin’s gardens, where a sun, as it is called, probably one of the Aztec calendar wheels, made of pure gold, of great size and thickness, was discovered. The cacique of Tacuba had confessed that a quantity of treasure was buried in the ground at one of his own villas. But when the Spaniards carried him to the spot, he alleged that “his only motive for saying so was the hope of dying on the road!” The soldiers, disappointed in their expectations, now, with the usual caprice of an unlicensed mob, changed their tone, and openly accused their commander of cruelty to his captive. The charge was well deserved,—but not from them.²

¹ “¿Estoi yo en algun deleite, ó baño?” (Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 145.) The literal version is not so poetical as “the bed of flowers,” into which this exclamation of Guatemozin is usually rendered.

² The most particular account of this disgraceful transaction is given by Bernal Diaz, one of those selected to accompany the lord

The tidings of the fall of Mexico were borne on the wings of the wind over the plateau, and down the broad sides of the Cordilleras. Many envoys made their appearance from the remote Indian tribes, anxious to learn the truth of the astounding intelligence and to gaze with their own eyes on the ruins of the detested city. Among these were ambassadors from the kingdom of Michoacán, a powerful and independent state, inhabited by one of the kindred Nahuatlac races, and lying between the Mexican Valley and the Pacific. The embassy was soon followed by the king of the country in person, who came in great state to the Castilian quarters. Cortés received him with equal parade, astonished him by the brilliant evolutions of his cavalry and by the thunders of his ordnance, and escorted him in one of the brigantines round the fallen city, whose pile of smouldering palaces and temples was all that now remained of the once dread capital of Anahuac. The Indian monarch gazed with silent awe on the scene of desolation, and eagerly craved the protection of the invincible beings who had caused it.³ His example was followed by ambas-
of Tacuba to his villa. (*Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 157.) He notices the affair with becoming indignation, but excuses Cortés from a voluntary part in it.

³ Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 308.—The simple statement of the Conqueror contrasts strongly with the pompous narrative of Herrera (*Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 3, cap. 3), and with that of Father Cavo, who may have drawn a little on his own imagination. “Cortés en una canoa ricamente entapizada, llevó á el Rey Vchichilze, y á los nobles de Michoacan á México. Este es uno de los palacios de Moctheuzoma (les decia); allí está el gran templo de Huitzilopuctli; estas ruinas son del grande edificio de Quauhtemoc, aquellos de la gran plaza del mercado. Conmovido Vehichilze de este espectáculo, se le saltaron las lágrimas.” *Los tres Siglos de México* (México, 1836), tom. i. p. 13.

sadors from the remote regions which had never yet had intercourse with the Spaniards. Cortés, who saw the boundaries of his empire thus rapidly enlarging, availed himself of the favorable dispositions of the natives to ascertain the products and resources of their several countries.

Two small detachments were sent into the friendly state of Michoacán, through which country they penetrated to the borders of the great Southern ocean. No European had as yet descended on its shores so far north of the equator. The Spaniards eagerly advanced into its waters, erected a cross on the sandy margin, and took possession of it, with all the usual formalities, in the name of their Catholic Majesties. On their return, they visited some of the rich districts towards the north, since celebrated for their mineral treasures, and brought back samples of gold and Californian pearls, with an account of their discovery of the ocean. The imagination of Cortés was kindled, and his soul swelled with exultation, at the splendid prospects which their discoveries unfolded. "Most of all," he writes to the emperor, "do I exult in the tidings brought me of the Great Ocean. For in it, as cosmographers, and those learned men who know most about the Indies, inform us, are scattered the rich isles teeming with gold and spices and precious stones."⁴ He at once

⁴ "Que todos los que tienen alguna ciencia, y experiencia en la Navegacion de las Indias, han tenido por muy cierto, que descubriendo por estas Partes la Mar del Sur, se habian de hallar muchas Islas ricas de Oro, y Perlas, y Piedras preciosas, y Especería, y se habian de descubrir y hallar otros muchos secretos y cosas admirables." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 302, 303.

sought a favorable spot for a colony on the shores of the Pacific, and made arrangements for the construction of four vessels to explore the mysteries of these unknown seas. This was the beginning of his noble enterprises for discovery in the Gulf of California.

Although the greater part of Anahuac, overawed by the successes of the Spaniards, had tendered their allegiance, there were some, especially on the southern slopes of the Cordilleras, who showed a less submissive disposition. Cortés instantly sent out strong detachments under Sandoval and Alvarado to reduce the enemy and establish colonies in the conquered provinces. The highly colored reports which Alvarado, who had a quick scent for gold, gave of the mineral wealth of Oaxaca, no doubt operated with Cortés in determining him to select this region for his own particular domain.

The commander-in-chief, with his little band of Spaniards, now daily recruited by reinforcements from the Islands, still occupied the quarters of Cojohuacan, which they had taken up at the termination of the siege. Cortés did not immediately decide in what quarter of the Valley to establish the new capital which was to take the place of the ancient Tenochtitlan. The situation of the latter, surrounded by water and exposed to occasional inundations, had some obvious disadvantages. But there was no doubt that in some part of the elevated and central plateau of the Valley the new metropolis should be built, to which both European and Indian might look up as to the head of the

colonial empire of Spain. At length he decided on retaining the site of the ancient city, moved to it, as he says, "by its past renown, and the memory"—not an enviable one, surely—"in which it was held among the nations;" and he made preparations for the reconstruction of the capital on a scale of magnificence which should, in his own language, "raise her to the rank of Queen of the surrounding provinces, in the same manner as she had been of yore."⁵

The labor was to be performed by the Indian population, drawn from all quarters of the Valley, and including the Mexicans themselves, great numbers of whom still lingered in the neighborhood of their ancient residence. At first they showed reluctance, and even symptoms of hostility, when called to this work of humiliation by their conquerors. But Cortés had the address to secure some of the principal chiefs in his interests, and under their authority and direction the labor of their countrymen was conducted. The deep groves of the Valley and the forests of the neighboring hills supplied cedar, cypress, and other durable woods for the interior of the buildings, and the quarries of *tetzontli* and the ruins of the ancient edifices furnished abundance of stone. As there were no beasts of draught employed by the Aztecs, an immense number of hands was necessarily required for the work. All within the immediate control of Cortés were pressed into the service. The

⁵ "Y crea Vuestra Magestad, que cada dia se irá ennoblecendo en tal manera, que como antes fué Principal, y Señora de todas estas Provincias, que lo será tambien de aquí adelante." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 307.

spot so recently deserted now swarmed with multitudes of Indians of various tribes, and with Europeans, the latter directing, while the others labored. The prophecy of the Aztecs was accomplished.⁶ And the work of reconstruction went forward with a rapidity like that shown by an Asiatic despot, who concentrates the population of an empire on the erection of a favorite capital.⁷

Yet the condition of Cortés, notwithstanding the success of his arms, suggested many causes for anxiety. He had not received a word of encouragement from home,—not a word, indeed, of encouragement or censure. In what light his irregular course was regarded by the government or the nation was still matter of painful uncertainty. He now prepared another Letter to the emperor, the Third in the published series, written in the same simple and energetic style which has entitled his Commentaries, as they may be called, to a comparison with those of Cæsar. It was dated at Cojohuacan, May 15th, 1522, and in it he recapitulated the events of the final siege of the capital, and his subsequent operations, accompanied by many sagacious reflections, as usual, on the character and

⁶ *Ante*, vol. iv., p. 70.

⁷ Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 4, cap. 8.—Oviedo, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., lib. 33, cap. 32.—Camargo, *Hist. de Tlascala*, MS.—Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 162.—“En la cual (la edificacion de la ciudad) los primeros años andaba mas gente que en la edificacion del templo de Jerusalem, porque era tanta la gente que andaba en las obras, que apénas podia hombre romper por algunas calles y calzadas, aunque son muy anchas.” (Toribio, *Hist. de los Indios*, MS., Parte 1, cap. 1.) Ixtlilxochitl supplies any blank which the imagination might leave, by filling it up with 400,000, as the number of natives employed in this work by Cortés! *Venida de los Españoles*, p. 60.

resources of the country. With this letter he purposed to send the royal fifth of the spoils of Mexico, and a rich collection of fabrics, especially of gold and jewelry wrought into many rare and fanciful forms. One of the jewels was an emerald, cut in a pyramidal shape, of so extraordinary a size that the base was as broad as the palm of the hand!⁸ The collection was still further augmented by specimens of many of the natural products, as well as of animals peculiar to the country.⁹

⁸ "Sirviéron al Emperador con muchas piedras, i entre ellas con una esmeralda fina, como la palma, pero quadrada, i que se remataba en punta como pirámide." (Gomara, Crónica, cap. 146.) Martyr confirms the account of this wonderful emerald, which, he says, "was reported to the king and council to be nearly as broad as the palm of the hand, and which those who had seen it thought could not be procured for any sum." De Orbe Vovo, dec. 8, cap. 4.*

⁹ [Cortés availed himself of the same opportunity by which the royal fifth was despatched, to send costly or curious presents to numerous individuals and churches in Spain. For this fact I am

* [Alaman, however, denies that this stone was an emerald, or that any true emeralds were found by the Conquerors in Mexico, notwithstanding the frequent mention of them in contemporary relations. "There are no emeralds," he says, "in our republic; and the stones mistaken for them at the time of the Conquest were jade or serpentine." As an evidence of the ignorance on this subject common in Europe at a former period, he cites the famous instance of the *Sacro Catino* at Genoa, regarded for ages as an emerald of priceless value, but now proved to be an imitation. (Disertaciones históricas, tom. i. p. 161.) It is certain that no emeralds are now found in any part of North America. Yet the Conquerors would seem to have been more discriminating than Señor Alaman represents them. They distinguished the *chalchivitl*, supposed to have been jade, from the emerald, and rejected as valueless other green stones prized by the natives. The case of the *Sacro Catino* does not apply, since it is not pretended that the Mexicans possessed the art of imitating precious stones by means of paste. The fact, therefore, that the emeralds sent and taken to Europe by Cortés were there recognized as genuine affords a presumptive proof in their favor, which has been generally accepted as sufficient by modern writers on the subject.—K.]

The army wrote a letter to accompany that of Cortés, in which they expatiated on his manifold services and besought the emperor to ratify his proceedings and confirm him in his present authority. The important mission was intrusted to two of the general's confidential officers, Quiñones and Avila. It proved to be unfortunate. The agents touched at the Azores, where Quiñones lost his life in a brawl. Avila, resuming his voyage, was captured by a French privateer, and the rich spoils of the Aztecs went into the treasury of his Most Christian Majesty. Francis the First gazed with pardonable envy on the treasures which his Imperial rival drew from his colonial domains; and he intimated his discontent by peevishly expressing a desire "to see the clause in Adam's testament which entitled his brothers of Castile and Portugal to divide the New World between them." Avila found means, through a private hand, of transmitting his letters,

indebted to the kindness of Mr. George Sumner, who, when in Spain, made a visit to the archives of Simancas, from which he has furnished me with some interesting particulars for the period on which I am engaged. In a file endorsed *Papeles de Cortés* he met with a list, without date, but evidently belonging to the year 1522, of the gold, plumage, and ornaments sent by Cortés to the different persons and institutions in Spain. "The policy of Cortés and his clear-sightedness," Mr. Sumner justly remarks, "are well shown by this. Not a church, not a shrine of any fame, throughout Spain, has been forgotten. To Santa María del Antigua in Sevilla, a rich offering of gold and of plumage; to Santa María del Pilar in Zaragoza, the same; another again to San Jago de Compostella; and one to the Cartuja of Seville, in which the bones of Columbus were then lying. There are plumages and gold for every place of importance. Then the bishops and men of power are not forgotten; for to them also are rich presents sent. In a time when there were no gazettes to trumpet one's fame, what surer way to notoriety than this? What surer way, in Spain, for gaining that security which Cortés so much needed?"]

the most important part of his charge, to Spain, where they reached the court in safety.¹⁰

While these events were passing, affairs in Spain had been taking an unfavorable turn for Cortés. It may seem strange that the brilliant exploits of the Conqueror of Mexico should have attracted so little notice from the government at home. But the country was at that time distracted by the dismal feuds of the *comunidades*. The sovereign was in Germany, too much engrossed by the cares of the empire to allow leisure for those of his own kingdom. The reins of government were in the hands of Adrian, Charles's preceptor; a man whose ascetic and studious habits better qualified him to preside over a college of monks than to fill, as he successively did, the most important posts in Christendom,—first as Regent of Castile, afterwards as Head of the Church. Yet the slow and hesitating Adrian could not have so long passed over in silence the important services of Cortés, but for the hostile interference of Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, sustained by Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, the chief person in the Spanish colonial department. This prelate, from his elevated station, possessed paramount authority in all matters relating to the Indies, and he had exerted it from the first, as we have already seen, in a manner most prejudicial to the interests of Cortés. He had now the address to obtain a warrant from the regent, which was designed to ruin the Conqueror at the very moment when his great enterprise had been

¹⁰ Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 8, cap. 4.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 169.

crowned with success. The instrument, after recapitulating the offences of Cortés in regard to Velasquez, appoints a commissioner with full power to visit the country, to institute an inquiry into the general's conduct, to suspend him from his functions, and even to seize his person and sequester his property, until the pleasure of the Castilian court could be known. The warrant was signed by Adrian, at Burgos, on the 11th of April, 1521, and countersigned by Fonseca.¹¹

The individual selected for the delicate task of apprehending Cortés and bringing him to trial on the theatre of his own discoveries and in the heart of his own camp was named Cristóval de Tápia, *veedor*, or inspector, of the gold foundries in St. Domingo. He was a feeble, vacillating man, as little competent to cope with Cortés in civil matters as Narvaez had shown himself to be in military.

The commissioner, clothed in his brief authority, landed, in December, at Villa Rica. But he was coldly received by the magistrates of the city. His credentials were disputed, on the ground of some technical informality. It was objected, moreover, that his commission was founded on obvious misrepresentations to the government; and, notwithstanding a most courteous and complimentary epistle which he received from Cortés, congratulating him, as an old friend, on his arrival, the *veedor* soon

¹¹ The instrument also conferred similar powers in respect to an inquiry into Narvaez's treatment of the licentiate Aylon. The whole document is cited in a deposition drawn up by the notary, Alonso de Vergara, setting forth the proceedings of Tápia and the municipality of Villa Rica, dated at Cempoalla, December 24, 1521. The MS. forms part of the collection of Don Vargas Ponce, in the archives of the Academy of History at Madrid.

found that he was neither to be permitted to penetrate far into the country nor to exercise any control there. He loved money; and, as Cortés knew the weak side of his "old friend," he proposed to purchase his horses, slaves, and equipage, at a tempting price. The dreams of disappointed ambition were gradually succeeded by those of avarice and the discomfited commissioner consented to reembark for Cuba, well freighted with gold, if not with glory, and provided with fresh matter of accusation against the high-handed measures of Cortés.¹²

Thus left in undisputed possession of authority, the Spanish commander went forward with vigor in his plans for the settlement of his conquests. The Panuchese, a fierce people on the borders of the Panuco, on the Atlantic coast, had taken up arms against the Spaniards. Cortés marched at the head of a considerable force into their country, defeated them in two pitched battles, and, after a severe campaign, reduced the warlike tribe to subjection.

A subsequent insurrection was punished with greater severity. They rose on the Spaniards, massacred five hundred of their oppressors, and menaced with destruction the neighboring settlement of San Estevan. Cortés ordered Sandoval to chastise the insurgents; and that officer, after a cam-

¹² Relacion de Vergara, MS.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 309-314.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 158.—The *regidores* of Mexico and other places remonstrated against Cortés' leaving the Valley to meet Tápia, on the ground that his presence was necessary to overawe the natives. (MS., Coyoacan, Dec. 12, 1521.) The general acquiesced in the force of a remonstrance which it is not improbable was made at his own suggestion.

paign of incredible hardship, completely routed the barbarians, captured four hundred of their chiefs, and, after the affected formalities of a trial, sentenced every man of them to the stake or the gibbet. "By which means," says Cortés, "God be praised! the safety of the Spaniards was secured, and the province once more restored to tranquillity and peace."¹³ He had omitted to mention in his letter his ungenerous treatment of Guatemozin. But the undisguised and *naïve* manner, so to speak, in which he details these circumstances to the emperor, shows that he attached no discredit to the deed. It was the just recompense of *rebellion*; a word that has been made the apology for more atrocities than any other word,—save *religion*.

During this interval the great question in respect to Cortés and the colony had been brought to a decisive issue. The general must have succumbed under the insidious and implacable attacks of his enemies, but for the sturdy opposition of a few powerful friends zealously devoted to his interests. Among them may be mentioned his own father, Don Martin Cortés, a discreet and efficient person,¹⁴ and the duke de Bejar, a powerful nobleman, who from an early period had warmly espoused the cause of Cortés. By their representations the timid regent was at length convinced that

¹³ "Como ya (loado nuestro Señor) estaba toda la Provincia muy pacífica, y segura." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 367.

¹⁴ The Muñoz collection of MSS. contains a power of attorney given by Cortés to his father, authorizing him to manage all negotiations with the emperor and with private persons, to conduct all lawsuits on his behalf, to pay over and receive money, etc.

the measures of Fonseca were prejudicial to the interests of the crown, and an order was issued interdicting him from further interference in any matters in which Cortés was concerned.

While the exasperated prelate was chafing under this affront, both the commissioners Tápia and Narvaez arrived in Castile. The latter had been ordered to Cojohuacan after the surrender of the capital, where his cringing demeanor formed a striking contrast to the swaggering port which he had assumed on first entering the country. When brought into the presence of Cortés, he knelt down, and would have kissed his hand, but the latter raised him from the ground, and, during his residence in his quarters, treated him with every mark of respect. The general soon afterwards permitted his unfortunate rival to return to Spain, where he proved, as might have been anticipated, a most bitter and implacable enemy.¹⁵

These two personages, reinforced by the discontented prelate, brought forward their several charges against Cortés with all the acrimony which mortified vanity and the thirst of vengeance could inspire. Adrian was no longer in Spain, having been called to the chair of St. Peter; but Charles the Fifth, after his long absence, had returned to his dominions, in July, 1522. The royal ear was instantly assailed with accusations of Cortés on the one hand and his vindication on the other, till the young monarch, perplexed, and unable to decide on the merits of the question, referred the whole subject to the decision of a board selected

¹⁵ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 158.

for the purpose. It was drawn partly from the members of his privy council, and partly from the Indian department, with the Grand Chancellor of Naples as its president, and constituted altogether a tribunal of the highest respectability for integrity and wisdom.¹⁶

By this learned body a patient and temperate hearing was given to the parties. The enemies of Cortés accused him of having seized and finally destroyed the fleet intrusted to him by Velasquez and fitted out at the governor's expense; of having afterwards usurped powers in contempt of the royal prerogative; of the unjustifiable treatment of Narvaez and Tápia, when they had been lawfully commissioned to supersede him; of cruelty to the natives, and especially to Guatemozin; of embezzling the royal treasures, and remitting but a small part of its dues to the crown; of squandering the revenues of the conquered countries in useless and wasteful schemes, and particularly in rebuilding the capital on a plan of unprecedented extravagance; of pursuing, in short, a system of violence and extortion, without respect to the public interest or any other end than his own selfish aggrandizement.

In answer to these grave charges, the friends of Cortés adduced evidence to show that he had defrayed with his own funds two-thirds of the cost of the expedition. The powers of Velasquez ex-

¹⁶ Sayas, *Annales de Aragon* (Zaragoza, 1666), cap. 63, 78.—It is a sufficient voucher for the respectability of this court that we find in it the name of Dr. Galindez de Carbajal, an eminent Castilian jurist, grown gray in the service of Ferdinand and Isabella, whose confidence he enjoyed to the highest degree.

tended only to traffic, not to establish a colony. Yet the interest of the crown required the latter. The army had therefore necessarily assumed this power to themselves; but, having done so, they had sent intelligence of their proceedings to the emperor and solicited his confirmation of them. The rupture with Narvaez was that commander's own fault; since Cortés would have met him amicably, had not the violent measures of his rival, threatening the ruin of the expedition, compelled him to an opposite course. The treatment of Tápia was vindicated on the grounds alleged to that officer by the municipality at Cempoalla. The violence to Guatemozin was laid at the door of Alderete, the royal treasurer, who had instigated the soldiers to demand it. The remittances to the crown, it was clearly proved, so far from falling short of the legitimate fifth, had considerably exceeded it. If the general had expended the revenues of the country on costly enterprises and public works, it was for the interest of the country that he did so, and he had incurred a heavy debt by straining his own credit to the utmost for the same great objects. Neither did they deny that, in the same spirit, he was now rebuilding Mexico on a scale suited to the metropolis of a vast and opulent empire.

They enlarged on the opposition he had experienced throughout his whole career from the governor of Cuba, and still more from the bishop of Burgos, which latter functionary, instead of affording him the aid to have been expected, had discouraged recruits, stopped his supplies, sequs-

tered such property as from time to time he had sent to Spain, and falsely represented his remittances to the crown as coming from the governor of Cuba. In short, such and so numerous were the obstacles thrown in his path that Cortés had been heard to say "he had found it more difficult to contend against his own countrymen than against the Aztecs." They concluded with expatiating on the brilliant results of his expedition, and asked if the council were prepared to dishonor the man who, in the face of such obstacles and with scarcely other resources than what he found in himself, had won an empire for Castile such as was possessed by no European potentate!¹⁷

This last appeal was irresistible. However irregular had been the manner of proceeding, no one could deny the grandeur of the results. There was not a Spaniard that could be insensible to such services, or that would not have cried out "Shame!" at an ungenerous requital of them. There were three Flemings in the council; but there seems to have been no difference of opinion in the body. It was decided that neither Velasquez nor Fonseca should interfere further in the concerns of New Spain. The difficulties of the former with Cortés were regarded in the nature of a private suit; and, as such, redress must be sought by the regular course of law. The acts of Cortés were confirmed in their full extent. He was constituted Governor, Captain-General, and Chief Justice of New

¹⁷ Sayas, *Annales de Aragon*, cap. 78.—Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 4, cap. 3.—Probanza en la Villa Segura, MS.—Declaraciones de Puertocarrero y de Montejo, MS.

Spain, with power to appoint to all offices, civil and military, and to order any person to leave the country whose residence there he might deem prejudicial to the interests of the crown. This judgment of the council was ratified by Charles the Fifth, and the commission investing Cortés with these ample powers was signed by the emperor at Valladolid, October 15th, 1522. A liberal salary was provided, to enable the governor of New Spain to maintain his office with suitable dignity. The favor of his sovereign was rendered still more welcome by a letter of the same date, written by him to the general, in which, after expatiating on the services of Cortés, he declares it to be his intention to make him such a requital as they well deserve.¹⁸ The principal officers were recompensed with honors and substantial emoluments; and the troops, together with some privileges grateful to the vanity of the soldier, received the promise of liberal grants of land. The emperor still further complimented them by a letter written to the army with his own hand, in which he acknowledged its services in the fullest manner.¹⁹

From this hour the influence of Fonseca in the Indian department was at an end. He did not

¹⁸ [“É porque soy certificado de lo mucho que vos en ese descubrimiento é conquista y en tornar á ganar la dicha ciudad é provincias habeis hecho é trabajado, de que me he tenido é tengo por muy servido, é tengo la voluntad que es razon para vos favorecer y hacer la merced que vuestros servicios y trabajos merecen.”—The whole letter is inserted by Alaman in his *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. i. apénd. 2, p. 144, et seq.]

¹⁹ *Nombramiento de Gobernador y Capitan General y Justicia Mayor de Nueva-España*, MS.—Also Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 168.

long survive his chagrin, as he died in the following year. No man was in a situation to do more for the prosperity of his country than the bishop of Burgos. For more than thirty years, ever since the first dawn of discovery under Columbus, he had held supreme control over colonial affairs; and it lay with him, therefore, in an especial degree, to give ardor to enterprise, and to foster the youthful fortunes of the colonies. But he lay like a blight upon them. He looked with an evil eye on the most illustrious of the Spanish discoverers, and sought only to throw impediments in their career. Such had been his conduct towards Columbus, and such to Cortés. By a wise and generous policy, he might have placed his name among the great lights of his age. As it was, he only served to bring these into greater lustre by contrast with his own dark and malignant nature. His career shows the overweening ascendancy which the ecclesiastical profession possessed in Castile in the sixteenth century; when it could raise a man to so important a station, for which he was totally unfit, and keep him there after he had proved himself to be so.²⁰

The messengers who bore the commission of Cortés to Mexico touched on their way at Cuba, where the tidings were proclaimed by sound of trumpet. It was a death-blow to the hopes of Velasquez. Exasperated by the failure of his

²⁰ The character of Fonseca has been traced by the same hand which has traced that of Columbus. (Irving's *Life and Voyages of Columbus*, Appendix, No. 32.) Side by side they will go down to posterity in the beautiful page of the historian, though the characters of the two individuals have been inscribed with pens as different from each other as the golden and iron pen which Paolo Giovio tells us he employed in his compositions.

schemes, impoverished by the expense of expeditions of which others had reaped the fruits, he had still looked forward to eventual redress, and cherished the sweet hope of vengeance,—long delayed. That hope was now gone. There was slight chance of redress, he well knew, in the tedious and thorny litigation of the Castilian courts. Ruined in fortune, dishonored before the nation, the haughty spirit of the governor was humbled in the dust. He would take no comfort, but fell into a solemn melancholy, and in a few months died—if report be true—of a broken heart.²¹

The portrait usually given of Velasquez is not favorable. Yet Las Casas speaks kindly of him, and, when his prejudices are not involved, there can be no better authority. But Las Casas knew him when, in his earlier days, the missionary first landed in Cuba. The governor treated him with courtesy, and even confidence; and it was natural that the condescension of a man of high family and station should have made its impression on the feelings of the poor ecclesiastic. In most accounts he is depicted as a haughty, irascible person, jealous of authority and covetous of wealth. He quarrelled with Grijalva, Cortés' predecessor, apparently without cause. With as little reason, he broke with Cortés before he left the port. He proposed objects to himself in their nature incompatible. He proposed that others should fight his battles, and that he should win the laurels; that others should make discoveries, and that he should reap the fruits of them. None but a weak mind would have conformed to his conditions, and a weak mind could

²¹ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 158.

not have effected his objects. His appointment of Cortés put him in a false position for the rest of his life. His efforts to retrieve his position only made things worse. The appointment of Cortés to the command was scarcely a greater error than the subsequent appointment of Narvaez and of Tápia. The life of Velasquez was a series of errors.

Narvaez had no better fate than his friend the governor of Cuba. In the hope of retrieving his fortunes, he continued to pursue his adventurous career, and embarked in an expedition to Honduras. It was his last; and Las Casas, who had little love for the Conquerors, and who had watched the acts of cruelty perpetrated by Narvaez, concludes the notice of his death with the assurance that the "devil took possession of his soul."

The announcement of the emperor's commission confirming Cortés in the supreme authority of New Spain was received there with general acclamation. The army rejoiced in having at last secured not merely an amnesty for their irregular proceedings, but a distinct acknowledgment of their services. The nomination of Cortés to the supreme command put his mind at ease as to the past, and opened to him a noble theatre for future enterprise. The soldiers congratulated themselves on the broad powers conferred on their commander, and, as they reckoned up their scars and their services, indulged in golden dreams and the most vague and visionary expectations. It is not strange that their expectations should have been disappointed.

CHAPTER II

MODERN MEXICO—SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY
—CONDITION OF THE NATIVES—CHRISTIAN MIS-
SIONARIES—CULTIVATION OF THE SOIL—VOY-
AGES AND EXPEDITIONS

1522-1524

IN less than four years from the destruction of Mexico, a new city had risen on its ruins, which, if inferior to the ancient capital in extent, surpassed it in magnificence and strength. It occupied so exactly the same site as its predecessor, that the *plaza mayor*, or great square, was the same spot which had been covered by the huge *teocalli* and the palace of Montezuma; while the principal streets took their departure as before from this central point, and, passing through the whole length of the city, terminated at the principal causeways. Great alterations, however, took place in the fashion of the architecture. The streets were widened, many of the canals were filled up, and the edifices were constructed on a plan better accommodated to European taste and the wants of a European population.

On the site of the temple of the Aztec war-god rose the stately cathedral dedicated to St. Fran-

cis;¹ and, as if to complete the triumphs of the Cross, the foundations were laid with the broken images of the Aztec gods.² In a corner of the square, on the ground once covered by the House of Birds, stood a Franciscan convent, a magnificent pile, erected a few years after the Conquest by a lay brother, Pedro de Gante, a natural son, it is said, of Charles the Fifth.³ In an opposite quarter of the same square Cortés caused his own palace to be constructed. It was built of hewn stone, and seven thousand cedar beams are said to have been used for the interior.⁴ The government afterwards appropriated it to the residence of the viceroys; and the Conqueror's descendants, the dukes of Monteleone, were allowed to erect a new mansion in another part of the *plaza*,* on the spot which, by an ominous coincidence, had been covered by the palace of Montezuma.⁵

The houses occupied by the Spaniards were of stone, combining with elegance a solid strength which made them capable of defence like so many

¹ [According to Señor Alaman, the cathedral, instead of being dedicated to Saint Francis, was consecrated to the Assumption of the Virgin. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 254.]

² Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 4, cap. 8.

³ Clavigero, *Stor. del Messico*, tom. i. p. 271.—Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 58.

⁴ Herrera, *Hist. general*, *ubi supra*.

⁵ Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 72.

*[The two palaces "were built on the sites of the old and new palaces of Montezuma, located respectively in the western and south-eastern parts of the ancient square." Bancroft, *Mexico*, ii. 12. "Humboldt's *Essai Politique* misleads Prescott about the location of the old palace and places the new where the old really stood." *Ibid.*—M.]

fortresses.⁶ The Indian buildings were for the most part of an inferior quality. They were scattered over the ancient district of Tlatelolco, where the nation had made its last stand for freedom. This quarter was also provided with a spacious cathedral;⁷ and thirty inferior churches attested the care of the Spaniards for the spiritual welfare of the natives.⁸ It was in watching over his Indian flock, and in the care of the hospitals with which the new capital was speedily endowed, that the good Father Olmedo, when oppressed by growing infirmities, spent the evening of his days.⁹

To give greater security to the Spaniards, Cortés caused a strong fortress to be erected in a place since known as the *Matadero*.¹⁰ It was provided with a dock-yard, and the brigantines which had served in the siege of Mexico were long preserved there as memorials of the Conquest. When the fortress was completed, the general, owing to the evil offices of Fonseca, found himself in want of artillery and ammunition for its defence. He supplied the former deficiency by causing cannon to be cast in his own foundries, made of the copper which was common in the country, and tin which he obtained with more difficulty from the mines of Tasco. By this means, and a contribution which he received from the shipping, he contrived to mount

⁶ Rel. d'un gentil' huomo, ap. Ramusio, tom. iii. fol. 309.

⁷ [Alaman asserts that there was no cathedral in Tlatelolco, but a Franciscan convent, dedicated to St. James, which still exists. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 255.]

⁸ Rel. d'un gentil' huomo, ap. Ramusio, *ubi supra*.

⁹ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 177.

¹⁰ Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 376, nota.

his walls with seventy pieces of ordnance. Stone balls, much used in that age, could easily be made; but for the manufacture of his powder, although there was nitre in abundance, he was obliged to seek the sulphur by a perilous expedition into the bowels of the great *volcan*.¹¹ Such were the resources displayed by Cortés, enabling him to supply every deficiency, and to triumph over every obstacle which the malice of his enemies had thrown in his path.

The general's next care was to provide a population for the capital. He invited the Spaniards thither by grants of lands and houses, while the Indians, with politic liberality, were permitted to live under their own chiefs as before, and to enjoy various immunities. With this encouragement, the Spanish quarter of the city in the neighborhood of the great square could boast in a few years two thousand families; while the Indian district of Tlatelolco included no less than thirty thousand.¹² The various trades and occupations were resumed; the canals were again covered with barges; two vast markets in the respective quarters of the capital displayed all the different products and manufactures of the surrounding country; and the city swarmed with a busy, industrious population, in which the white man and the Indian, the conqueror and the conquered, mingled together promiscuously in peaceful and picturesque confusion. Not

¹¹ For an account of this singular enterprise, see *ante*, vol. ii. p. 227.

¹² Cortés, reckoning only the Indian population, says *treinta mil vecinos*. (Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 375.) Gomara, speaking of Mexico some years later, estimates the number of Spanish householders as in the text. *Crónica*, cap. 162.

twenty years had elapsed since the Conquest, when a missionary who visited it had the confidence, or the credulity, to assert that "Europe could not boast a single city so fair and opulent as Mexico."¹³

The metropolis of our day would seem to stand in a different situation from that reared by the Conquerors; for the waters no longer flow through its streets, nor wash the ample circumference of its walls. These waters have retreated within the diminished basin of Tezcoco; and the causeways, which anciently traversed the depths of the lake, are not now to be distinguished from the other avenues to the capital. But the city, embellished, it is true, by the labors of successive viceroys, is substantially the same as in the days of the Conquerors; and the massive grandeur of the few buildings that remain of the primitive period, and the general magnificence and symmetry of its plan, attest the far-sighted policy of its founder, which looked beyond the present to the wants of coming generations.

The attention of Cortés was not confined to the capital. He was careful to establish settlements in every part of the country which afforded a favorable position for them. He founded Zacatula on the shores of the miscalled Pacific, Coliman in the territory of Michoacán, San Estevan on the Atlantic coast, probably not far from the site of Tam-

¹³ Toribio, *Hist. de los Indios*, MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.—Yet this is scarcely stronger language than that of the Anonymous Conqueror: "Così ben ordinato et di si belle piazze et strade, quanto d' altre città che siano al mondo." *Rel. d'un gentil' huomo*, ap. Ramusio, tom. iii. fol. 309.

pico, Medellin (so called after his own birthplace) in the neighborhood of the modern Vera Cruz, and a port near the river Antigua, from which it derived its name. It was designed to take the place of Villa Rica, which, as experience has shown, from its exposed situation, afforded no protection to shipping against the winds that sweep over the Mexican Gulf. Antigua, sheltered within the recesses of a bay, presented a more advantageous position. Cortés established there a board of trade, connected the settlement by a highway with the capital, and fondly predicted that his new city would become the great emporium of the country.¹⁴ But in this he was mistaken. From some cause, not very obvious, the port of entry was removed, at the close of the sixteenth century, to the modern Vera Cruz, which, without any superiority, probably, of topographical position, or even of salubrity of climate, has remained ever since the great commercial capital of New Spain.

Cortés stimulated the settlement of his several colonies by liberal grants of land and municipal privileges. The great difficulty was to induce women to reside in the country; and without them he felt that the colonies, like a tree without roots, must soon perish. By a singular provision, he required every settler, if a married man, to bring over

““Y tengo por cierto, que aquel Pueblo ha de ser, despues de esta Ciudad, el mejor que obiere en esta Nueva España.” (Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 382.) The archbishop confounds this town with the modern Vera Cruz. But the general’s description of the port refutes this supposition, and confirms our confidence in Clavigero’s statement that the present city was founded by the Conde de Monterey, at the time mentioned in the text. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 47, note.

his wife within eighteen months, on pain of forfeiting his estate. If he were too poor to do this himself, the government would assist him. Another law imposed the same penalty on all bachelors who did not provide themselves with wives within the same period. The general seems to have considered celibacy as too great a luxury for a young country.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ordenanzas municipales, Tenochtitlan, Marzo, 1524, MS.*—The Ordinances made by Cortés for the government of the country during his viceroyalty are still preserved in Mexico; and the copy in my possession was transmitted to me from that capital. They give ample evidence of the wise and penetrating spirit which embraced every object worthy of the attention of an enlightened ruler; and I will quote, in the original, the singular provisions mentioned in the text:

“Item. Por que mas se manifieste la voluntad que los pobladores de estas partes tienen de residir y permanecer en ellas, mando que todas las personas que tuvieren Indios, que fueren casados en Castilla ó en otras partes, que traigan sus mugeres dentro de un año y medio primero siguientes de como estas ordenanzas fueren pregonadas, so pena de perder los Indios, y todo lo con ellos adquirido é grangeado; y por que muchas personas podrian poner por achaque aunque tuviesen aparejo de decir que no tienen dineros para enviar por ellas, por hende las tales personas que tuvieran esta necesidad parescan ante el Ro. Pe. Fray Juan de Tecto y ante Alonso de Estrada, tesorero de su Magestad, á les informar de su necesidad, para que ellos la comuniquen á mí, y su necesidad se remedie; y si algunas personas hay que casados y no tienen sus mugeres en esta tierra, y quisieran traerlas, sepan que trayéndolas serán ayudadas así mismo para las traer, dando fianzas.

“Item. Por quanto en esta tierra hay muchas personas que tienen Indios de encomienda y no son casados, por hende por que conviene así para la *salud de sus conciencias de los tales* por estar en buen estado, como por la poblacion é noblecimiento de sus tierras, mando que las tales personas se casen, traigan y tengan sus mugeres en esta tierra dentro de un año y medio, despues que fueren pregonadas estas dichas Ordenanzas, é que no haciendo lo por el mismo caso sean privados y pierdan los tales Indios que así tienen.”

* [The exact date is given at the close of the document—“fecha en esta dicha ciudad [de Temixtitán] á veinte dias del mes de marzo de mil y quinientos é veinte y cuatro años.” Sir Arthur Helps says a

His own wife, Doña Catalina Xuarez, was among those who came over from the Islands to New Spain. According to Bernal Diaz, her coming gave him no particular satisfaction.¹⁶ It is possible; since his marriage with her seems to have been entered into with reluctance, and her lowly condition and connections stood somewhat in the way of his future advancement. Yet they lived happily together for several years, according to the testimony of Las Casas;¹⁷ and, whatever he may

¹⁶ Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 160.

¹⁷ *Ante*, vol. i. p. 310.

copy sent by Cortés to the emperor in October of the same year "has been lost, but the orders manifestly related to this subject of *encomiendas*." The original seems also to have disappeared. But an ancient copy of these, as well as of subsequent ordinances and instructions of a similar nature, is preserved in the archives of the duke of Terranova y Monteleone in the Hospital of Jesus at Mexico, and the whole series was published, so far back as 1844, by Señor Alaman, in his *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. i. pp. 105-143. The contents, therefore, are not a matter of inference. They do not relate chiefly or directly to the *encomiendas*, that system having been already established and become, in the language of Alaman, "the basis of the whole organization of the country." The "Ordenanzas," while they incidentally modify the system, consist for the most part of regulations suggested by the general condition and circumstances of a new colony. They make provision for the military equipment and inspection of the settlers, with a view to their readiness for service; for their permanent residence in the country, which is made a condition of their holding *repartimientos*; for the conversion of the natives, their protection against robbery and oppression, and the education of the children of their chiefs; for the cultivation of imported plants and grain, and the raising of cattle, sheep, and swine; for facilitating traffic by the establishment of markets, adjustment of prices, etc.; and for the organization of the municipalities, prescribing their powers and forms of administration. Some of these provisions are still in force, while others, though obsolete, indicate the origin of certain existing customs. Taken together, they contain, in the opinion of Alaman, the foundation of all the later institutions of the country,—"el fundamento de todas nuestras instituciones."—K.]

have felt, he had the generosity, or the prudence, not to betray his feelings to the world. On landing, Doña Catalina was escorted by Sandoval to the capital, where she was kindly received by her husband, and all the respect paid to her to which she was entitled by her elevated rank. But the climate of the table-land was not suited to her constitution, and she died in three months after her arrival.¹⁸ An event so auspicious to his worldly prospects did not fail, as we shall see hereafter, to provoke the tongue of scandal to the most malicious, but, it is scarcely necessary to say, unfounded, inferences.

In the distribution of the soil among the Conquerors, Cortés adopted the vicious system of *repartimientos*, universally practised among his countrymen. In a letter to the emperor, he states that the superior capacity of the Indians in New Spain had made him regard it as a grievous thing to condemn them to servitude, as had been done in the Islands. But, on further trial, he had found the Spaniards so much harassed and impoverished that they could not hope to maintain themselves in the land without enforcing the services of the natives, and for this reason he had at length waived his own scruples in compliance with their repeated remonstrances.¹⁹ This was the wretched pretext used on the like occasions by his countrymen to cover up this flagrant act of injustice. The crown,

¹⁸ Of asthma, according to Bernal Diaz (*Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 160); but her death seems to have been too sudden to be attributed to that disease. I shall return to the subject hereafter.

¹⁹ Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 319, 320.

however, in its instructions to the general, disavowed the act and annulled the *repartimientos*.²⁰ It was all in vain. The necessities, or rather the cupidity, of the colonists, easily evaded the royal ordinances.* The colonial legislation of Spain

²⁰ Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 5, cap. 1.

* [This remark would imply that the instructions were published and some attempts at least made to enforce them. That such was not the case we learn from a remarkable private letter of Cortés to the emperor, sent with the "Relacion Quarta," and bearing the same date,—October 15, 1524. Referring first to an order that the Spanish settlers should be allowed to have free intercourse with the Indian population as a means of promoting conversion, he declines to comply with it on the ground that the effects would be most pernicious. The natives, he says, would be subjected to violence, robbery, and vexations of all kinds. Even with the present rigorous rule forbidding any Spaniard to leave his settlement and go among the Indians without a special license, the evils resulting from this intercourse were so great that if he and his officers should attend solely to their suppression they would be unable to effect it, the territory being so vast. If all the Spaniards now in the country or on their way to it were friars engaged in the work of conversion, entire freedom of intercourse would no doubt be profitable. But, the reverse being the case, such also would be the effect. Most of the Spaniards who came were men of base condition and manners, addicted to every sort of vice and sin; and if free intercourse were allowed, the natives would be converted to evil rather than to good, and, seeing the difference between what was preached and what was practised, would make a jest of what was taught them by the priests, thinking it was meant merely to bring them into servitude. The injuries done them would lead to rebellion; they would profit by their acquired knowledge to arm themselves better, and being so many and the Spaniards so few, the latter would be cut off singly, as had already happened in many cases, and the greatest work of conversion since the time of the apostles would come to a stop.

Turning then to the emperor's prohibition of the *repartimientos*, as a thing which his conscience would not suffer, the theologians having declared that since God had made the Indians free their liberty ought not to be taken away, Cortés states that he has not only not complied with this order, but he has kept it secret except from the officials, whom he has forbidden to make it public. His reasons for thus acting are as follows: 1st. The Spaniards are unable to live except by the labor of the Indians, and if deprived of this they

shows, in the repetition of enactments against slavery, the perpetual struggle that subsisted between the crown and the colonists, and the impotence of the former to enforce measures repugnant to the interests, at all events to the avarice, of the latter. New Spain furnishes no exception to the general fact.

The Tlascalans, in gratitude for their signal services, were exempted, at the recommendation of Cortés, from the doom of slavery. It should be added that the general, in granting the *repartimientos*, made many humane regulations for limiting the power of the master, and for securing as

would be obliged to leave the country. 2d. His system of *repartimientos* is such that by it the Indians are in fact taken out of captivity, their condition under their former masters having been one of intolerable servitude, in which they were not only deprived of all but the barest means of subsistence, but they and their children were sacrificed to the idols in numbers horrible to hear of, it being a certified fact that in the great temple of Mexico alone, at a single festival, one of many that were held annually, eight thousand persons had been sacrificed; all this, with innumerable other wrongs, had now ceased; and the surest punishment which could be inflicted on the Indians was the threat to send them back to their former masters. 3d. Enumerating the various provisions he has made for obviating the evils of the system as practised in the Islands, where, during a residence of twenty years, he had ample knowledge of its workings, he asserts that, in the mode in which it has been established and regulated by him, it will lead not to the diminution but to the preservation and increase of the natives, besides securing a provision for the settlers and large revenues to the crown, and he contends that the *repartimientos*, instead of being abrogated, should be made hereditary, so that the possessors might have a stronger interest in the proper cultivation of the soil, instead of seeking to extract from it the most that was possible in a given time.

The letter, which concludes by noticing and rejecting some minor points in the emperor's instructions, has been recently discovered, and is perhaps the ablest document that has come down to us with the signature of Cortés. It has been published by Señor Icazbalceta, in his Col. de Doc. para la Hist. de México, tom. i.—K.]

many privileges to the natives as were compatible with any degree of compulsory service.²¹ These limitations, it is true, were too often disregarded; and in the mining districts, in particular, the situation of the poor Indian was often deplorable. Yet the Indian population, clustering together in their own villages and living under their own magistrates, have continued to prove by their numbers, fallen as these have below their primitive amount, how far superior was their condition to that in most other parts of the vast colonial empire of Spain.²² This condition has been gradually ameliorated, under the influence of higher moral views and larger ideas of government, until the servile descendants of the ancient lords of the soil have been permitted, in republican Mexico, to rise—nominally, at least—to a level with the children of their conquerors.

Whatever disregard he may have shown to the political rights of the natives, Cortés manifested a commendable solicitude for their spiritual welfare. He requested the emperor to send out holy men to the country; not bishops and pampered prelates, who too often squandered the substance of the

²¹ Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 4, lib. 6, cap. 5.—Ordenanzas, MS.—The ordinances prescribe the service of the Indians, the hours they may be employed, their food, compensation, and the like. They require the *encomendero* to provide them with suitable means of religious instruction and places of worship. But what avail good laws, which in their very nature imply the toleration of a great abuse?

²² The whole population of New Spain in 1810 is estimated by Don Fernando Navarro y Noriega at about 6,000,000; of whom more than half were pure Indians. The author had the best means for arriving at a correct result. See Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. i. pp. 318, 319, note.

Church in riotous living, but godly persons, members of religious fraternities, whose lives might be a fitting commentary on their teaching. Thus only, he adds,—and the remark is worthy of note,—can they exercise any influence over the natives, who have been accustomed to see the least departure from morals in their own priesthood punished with the utmost rigor of the law.²³ In obedience to these suggestions, twelve Franciscan friars embarked for New Spain, which they reached early in 1524. They were men of unblemished purity of life, nourished with the learning of the cloister, and, like many others whom the Romish Church has sent forth on such apostolic missions, counted all personal sacrifices as little in the sacred cause to which they were devoted.²⁴

²³ Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 391-394.—The petition of the Conquerors was acceded to by the government, which further prohibited “attorneys and men learned in the law from setting foot in the country, on the ground that experience had shown they would be sure by their evil practices to disturb the peace of the community.” (Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 5, cap. 2.) These enactments are but an indifferent tribute to the character of the two professions in Castile.

²⁴ Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 1, cap. 1.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS. [My views of the character of the Spanish missionaries find favor with Señor Alaman, who warmly eulogizes the spirit of self-sacrifice and the untiring zeal which they showed in propagating the gospel among the natives: “El Sr. Prescott hace de los misioneros el justo aprecio que sus virtudes merecieron, y sus elogios son tanto mas recomendables, cuanto que sus opiniones religiosas parece deberian hacerle contrario á ellos. En efecto, solo la iglesia católica ha producido misioneros inflamados de un verdadero celo religioso, que los ha hecho sacrificar su vida por la propagacion de la religion y en beneficio de la humanidad.” Conquista de Méjico (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 255. Mr. Gallatin, also, in his “Notes on the Semi-civilized Nations of America,” pays a hearty tribute to the labors of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the New World: “The Dominican monks, though inquisitors and relentless persecutors in Spain, became in America the protectors of the In-

The presence of the reverend fathers in the country was greeted with general rejoicing. The inhabitants of the towns through which they passed came out in a body to welcome them; processions were formed of the natives bearing wax tapers in their hands, and the bells of the churches rang out a joyous peal in honor of their arrival. Houses of refreshment were provided for them along their route to the capital; and when they entered it they were met by a brilliant cavalcade of the principal cavaliers and citizens, with Cortés at their head. The general, dismounting, and bending one knee to the ground, kissed the robes of Father Martin of Valencia, the principal of the fraternity. The natives, filled with amazement at the viceroy's humiliation before men whose naked feet and tattered garments gave them the aspect of mendicants, henceforth regarded them as beings of a superior nature. The Indian chronicler of Tlascala does not conceal his admiration of this edifying condescension of Cortés, which he pronounces "one of the most heroical acts of his life!" ²⁵

dians. . . . The praise must be extended to all the Catholic priests, whether Franciscans or Jesuits, monks or curates. All, from the beginning, were, have ever been, and continue to be, the protectors and the friends of the Indian race." Transactions of the American Ethnological Society, i. 213.]

²⁵ "Cuyo hecho del rotisimo y humilde recebimiento fué uno de los heroicos hechos que este Capitan hizo, porque fué documento para que con mayor fervor los naturales desta tierra viniesen á la conversion de nuestra fec." (Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—See also Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 171.) Archbishop Lorenzana falls nothing short of the Tlascalan historian in his admiration of the religious zeal of the great *Conquistador*, which, he assures us, "entirely overwhelms him, as savoring so much more of the apostolic missionary than of the soldier!" Lorenzana, p. 393, nota.

The missionaries lost no time in the good work of conversion. They began their preaching through interpreters, until they had acquired a competent knowledge of the language themselves. They opened schools and founded colleges, in which the native youth were instructed in profane as well as Christian learning.* The ardor of the Indian neophyte emulated that of his teacher. In a few years every vestige of the primitive *teocallis* was effaced from the land. The uncouth idols of the country, and, unhappily, the hieroglyphical manuscripts, shared the same fate. Yet the missionary and the convert did much to repair these

* [A singular tribute to the thoroughness of the instruction thus given, and the facility with which it was imbibed, is rendered in a long complaint on the subject addressed to the emperor by Gerónimo Lopez, under date of October 20, 1541. The writer, a person evidently commissioned to send home reports on the condition of the country, denounces the system of education instituted by the Franciscan monks as diabolically pernicious,—“muy dañoso como el diablo.” He considers that the Indians should at the most be taught to repeat the Pater Noster and Ave Maria, the Creed and the Commandments, without any expositions, or any distinction of the persons of the Trinity and their attributes, above all without learning to read and write. Instead of this, they are taught not only these pernicious branches of knowledge, but punctuation, music,—nay, even grammar! Their natural ability is so great, and the devil is so largely interested in the matter, that they have acquired a skill in forming different kinds of letters which is marvellous, and a great number of them are thus enabled to carry on a correspondence and learn what is going on in the country from one sea to the other. There are boys among them who speak as elegant Latin as Tullius. They have translated and read the whole of the Scriptures,—the same thing that has ruined so many in Spain and given birth to a thousand heresies. A secular ecclesiastic told him that, having visited one of the colleges, he found there two hundred students, who stunned him with questions about religion, till the place seemed to him hell, and its inmates disciples of Satan.—Icazbalceta, Col. de Doc. para la Hist. de México, tom. ii.—K.]

losses by their copious accounts of the Aztec institutions, collected from the most authentic sources.²⁶

The business of conversion went on prosperously among the several tribes of the great Nahuatlac family. In about twenty years from the first advent of the missionaries, one of their body could make the pious vaunt that nine millions of converts—a number probably exceeding the population of the country—had been admitted within the Christian fold!²⁷ The Aztec worship was remarkable for its burdensome ceremonial, and prepared its votaries for the pomp and splendors of the Romish ritual. It was not difficult to pass from the fasts and festivals of the one religion to the fasts and festivals of the other; to transfer their homage from the fantastic idols of their own creation to the beautiful forms in sculpture and in painting which decorated the Christian cathedral. It is true, they could have comprehended little of the

²⁶ Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 3, cap. 1.—Father Sahagun, who has done better service in this way than any other of his order, describes with simple brevity the rapid process of demolition. “We took the children of the caciques,” he says, “into our schools, where we taught them to read and write, and to chant. The children of the poorer natives were brought together in the court-yard, and instructed there in the Christian faith. After our teaching, one or two brethren took the pupils to some neighboring *teocalli*, and, by working at it for a few days, they levelled it to the ground. In this way they demolished, in a short time, all the Aztec temples, great and small, *so that not a vestige of them remained.*” (Hist. de Nueva-España, tom. iii. p. 77.) This passage helps to explain why so few architectural relics of the Indian era still survive in Mexico.

²⁷ “De manera que á mi juicio y verdaderamente serán bautizados en este tiempo que digo, que serán quince años, mas de nueve millones de áimas de Indios.” Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 2, cap. 3.

dogmas of their new faith,* and little, it may be, of its vital spirit. But, if the philosopher may smile at the reflection that conversion, under these circumstances, was one of form rather than of substance, the philanthropist will console himself by considering how much the cause of humanity and good morals must have gained by the substitution of these unsullied rites for the brutal abominations of the Aztecs.

The Conquerors settled in such parts of the country as best suited their inclinations. Many occupied the southeastern slopes of the Cordilleras towards the rich valley of Oaxaca. Many more spread themselves over the broad surface of the table-land, which, from its elevated position, reminded them of the plateau of their own Castiles. Here, too, they were in the range of those inexhaustible mines which have since poured their silver deluge over Europe. The mineral resources of the land were not, indeed, fully explored or comprehended till at a much later period; but some few, as the mines of Zacatecas, Guanaxuato, and Tasco,—the last of which was also known in Montezuma's time,—had begun to be wrought within a generation after the Conquest.²⁸

But the best wealth of the first settlers was in the vegetable products of the soil, whether in-

²⁸ Clavigero, *Stor. del Messico*, tom. i. p. 43.—Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. iii. pp. 115, 145.—*Esposicion de Don Lucas Alaman* (México, 1828), p. 59.

*[As little as did Clovis and his Franks, when that doughty warrior embraced Christianity.—M.]

digenous, or introduced from abroad by the wise economy of Cortés. He had earnestly recommended the crown to require all vessels coming to the country to bring over a certain quantity of seeds and plants.²⁹ He made it a condition of the grants of land on the plateau, that the proprietor of every estate should plant a specified number of vines on it.³⁰ He further stipulated that no one should get a clear title to his estate until he had occupied it eight years.³¹ He knew that permanent residence could alone create that interest in the soil which would lead to its efficient culture, and that the opposite system had caused the impoverishment of the best plantations in the Islands. His various regulations, some of them not a little distasteful to the colonists, augmented the agricultural resources of the country by the addition of the most important European grains and other vegetables, for which the diversified climate of New Spain was admirably adapted. The sugar-cane was transplanted from the neighboring islands to the lower level of the country, and, together with indigo, cotton, and cochineal, formed a

²⁹ "Páraque cada Navío traiga cierta cantidad de Plantas, y que no pueda salir sin ellas, porque será mucha causa para la Poblacion, y perpetuacion de ella." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 397.*

³⁰ "Item, que cualquier vecino que tubiere Indios de repartimiento sea obligado á poner en ellos en cada un año con cada cien Indios de los que tuvieren de repartimiento mil sarmientos aunque sean de la planta de su tierra, escogiendo la mejor que pudiesse hallar." Ordenanzas municipales, año de 1524, MS.

³¹ Ordenanzas municipales, año de 1524, MS.

*[The first wheat came from three grains which were found in a sack of rice. Other wheat had been received, but it was all more or less damaged by the voyage. See Tapia, Relacion.—M.]

more desirable staple for the colony than its precious metals. Under the sun of the tropics, the peach, the almond, the orange, the vine, and the olive, before unknown there, flourished in the gardens of the table-land, at an elevation twice as great as that at which the clouds are suspended in summer above our heads. The importation of a European fruit or vegetable was hailed by the simple colonists with delight. The first produce of the exotic was celebrated by a festival, and the guests greeted each other, as on the appearance of an old familiar friend, who called up the remembrance of the past and the tender associations of their native land.³²

While thus occupied with the internal economy of the country, Cortés was still bent on his great schemes of discovery and conquest. In the preceding chapter we have seen him fitting out a little fleet at Zacatula to explore the shores of the Pacific. It was burnt in the dock-yard when nearly completed. This was a serious calamity, as most of the materials were to be transported across the country from Villa Rica. Cortés, however, with his usual promptness, took measures to repair the loss. He writes to the emperor that another squadron will soon be got ready at the same port, and, "he doubts not, will put his Majesty in possession

"["No general interest would attach to the private undertakings of Cortés, if the sole object of them had been the aggrandizement of his own fortune. But they were in fact the germs of what are now the most important branches of the national wealth; and they prove the grandeur of those views which in the times of the Conquest gave an impulse to whatever promised to contribute to the prosperity of the country." Alaman, *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. ii. p. 63.]

of more lands and kingdoms than the nation has ever heard of!"³³ This magnificent vaunt shows the common sentiment of the Spaniards at that time, who looked on the Pacific as the famed Indian Ocean, studded with golden islands and teeming with the rich treasures of the East.

A principal object of this squadron was the discovery of a strait which should connect the Atlantic with the Pacific. Another squadron, consisting of five vessels, was fitted out in the Gulf of Mexico, to take the direction of Florida, with the same view of detecting a strait. For Cortés trusted—we at this day may smile at the illusion—that one might be found in that direction which should conduct the navigator to those waters which had been traversed by the keels of Magellan!³⁴

The discovery of a strait was the great object to which nautical enterprise in that day was directed, as it had been ever since the time of Columbus. It was in the sixteenth century what the discovery of the Northwest passage has been in our own age,—the *ignis fatuus* of navigators. The vast extent of the American continent had been ascertained by the voyages of Cabot in the North, and of Magellan very recently in the South. The proximity, in certain quarters, of the two great oceans that

³³ "Tengo de ser causa, que Vuestra Cesarea Magestad sea en estas partes Señor de mas Reynos, y Señoríos que los que hasta hoy en nuestra Nacion se tiene noticia." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 374.

³⁴ "Much as I esteem Hernando Cortés," exclaims Oviedo, "for the greatest captain and most practised in military matters of any we have known, I think such an opinion shows he was no great cosmographer." (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 41.) Oviedo had lived to see its fallacy.

washed its eastern and western shores had been settled by the discoveries both of Balboa and of Cortés. European scholars could not believe that Nature had worked on a plan so repugnant, apparently, to the interests of humanity, as to interpose, through the whole length of the great continent, such a barrier to communication between the adjacent waters. The correspondence of men of science,³⁵ the instructions of the Court, the letters of Cortés, like those of Columbus, touch frequently on this favorite topic. "Your Majesty may be assured," he writes, "that, as I know how much you have at heart the discovery of *this great secret of a strait*, I shall postpone all interests and projects of my own, some of them of the highest moment, for the fulfilment of this great object."³⁶

It was partly with the same view that the general caused a considerable armament to be equipped and placed under the command of Cristóval de Olid, the brave officer who, as the reader will remember, had charge of one of the great divisions of the besieging army. He was to steer for Honduras and plant a colony on its northern coast. A detachment of Olid's squadron was afterwards to cruise along its southern shore towards Darien in search of the mysterious strait. The country was reported to be full of gold; so full that "the fishermen used gold weights for their nets." The life of the Spanish discoverers was one long day-dream. Illusion after illusion chased one another like the bubbles which the child throws off from his pipe,

³⁵ Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, ep. 811.

³⁶ Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 385.

as bright, as beautiful, and as empty. They lived in a world of enchantment.³⁷

Together with these maritime expeditions, Cortés fitted out a powerful expedition by land. It was intrusted to Alvarado, who, with a large force of Spaniards and Indians, was to descend the southern slant of the Cordilleras and penetrate into the countries that lay beyond the rich valley of Oaxaca. The campaigns of this bold and rapacious chief terminated in the important conquest of Guatemala. The general required his captains to send him minute accounts of the countries which they visited, the productions of the soil, and their general resources. The result was several valuable and interesting communications.³⁸ In his instructions for the conduct of these expeditions, he enjoined a considerate treatment of the natives, and inculcated a policy which may be called humane, as far as humanity is compatible with a system of subjugation.³⁹ Unfortunately, the character of his officers too often rendered these instructions unavailing.

³⁷ The illusion at home was kept up, in some measure, by the dazzling display of gold and jewels remitted from time to time, wrought into fanciful and often fantastic forms. One of the articles sent home by Cortés was a piece of ordnance, made of gold and silver, of very fine workmanship, the metal of which alone cost 25,000 *pesos de oro*. Oviedo, who saw it in the palace, speaks with admiration of this magnificent toy. Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 41.

³⁸ Among these may be particularly mentioned the Letters of Alvarado and Diego de Godoy, transcribed by Oviedo in his Hist. de las Ind., MS. (lib. 33, cap. 42-44), and translated by Ramusio for his rich collection, Viaggi, tom. iii.

³⁹ See, among others, his orders to his kinsman, Francisco Cortés, —“Instruccion civil y militar por la Expedicion de la Costa de Colima.” The paper is dated in 1524, and forms part of the Muñoz collection of MSS.

In the prosecution of his great enterprises, Cortés, within three short years after the Conquest, had reduced under the dominion of Castile an extent of country more than four hundred leagues in length, as he affirms, on the Atlantic coast, and more than five hundred on the Pacific, and, with the exception of a few interior provinces of no great importance, had brought them to a condition of entire tranquillity.⁴⁰ In accomplishing this, he had freely expended the revenues of the crown, drawn from tributes similar to those which had been anciently paid by the natives to their own sovereigns; and he had, moreover, incurred a large debt on his own account, for which he demanded remuneration from the government. The celebrity of his name, and the dazzling reports of the conquered countries, drew crowds of adventurers to New Spain, who furnished the general with recruits for his various enterprises.

Whoever would form a just estimate of this remarkable man must not confine himself to the history of the Conquest. His military career, indeed, places him on a level with the greatest captains of his age. But the period subsequent to the Conquest affords different, and in some respects nobler, points of view for the study of his character. For we then see him devising a system of government for the motley and antagonist races, so to speak, now first brought under a common do-

⁴⁰ Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 371.—“Well may we wonder,” exclaims his archiepiscopal editor, “that Cortés and his soldiers could have overrun and subdued, in so short a time, countries, many of them so rough and difficult of access that even at the present day we can hardly penetrate them!” *Ibid.*, nota.

minion; repairing the mischiefs of war; and employing his efforts to detect the latent resources of the country and to stimulate it to its highest power of production. The narrative may seem tame, after the recital of exploits as bold and adventurous as those of a paladin of romance. But it is only by the perusal of this narrative that we can form an adequate conception of the acute and comprehensive genius of Cortés.

CHAPTER III

DEFECTION OF OLID—DREADFUL MARCH TO HONDURAS — EXECUTION OF GUATEMOZIN — DOÑA MARINA—ARRIVAL AT HONDURAS

1524-1526

IN the last chapter we have seen that Cristóval de Olid was sent by Cortés to plant a colony in Honduras. The expedition was attended with consequences which had not been foreseen. Made giddy by the possession of power, Olid, when he had reached his place of destination, determined to assert an independent jurisdiction for himself. His distance from Mexico, he flattered himself, might enable him to do so with impunity. He misunderstood the character of Cortés, when he supposed that any distance would be great enough to shield a rebel from his vengeance.

It was long before the general received tidings of Olid's defection. But no sooner was he satisfied of this than he despatched to Honduras a trusty captain and kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, with directions to arrest his disobedient officer. Las Casas was wrecked on the coast, and fell into Olid's hands, but eventually suc-

ceeded in raising an insurrection in the settlement, seized the person of Olid, and beheaded that unhappy delinquent in the market-place of Naco.¹

Of these proceedings, Cortés learned only what related to the shipwreck of his lieutenant. He saw all the mischievous consequences that must arise from Olid's example, especially if his defection were to go unpunished. He determined to take the affair into his own hands, and to lead an expedition in person to Honduras. He would thus, moreover, be enabled to ascertain from personal inspection the resources of the country, which were reputed great on the score of mineral wealth, and would perhaps detect the point of communication between the great oceans, which had so long eluded the efforts of the Spanish discoverers. He was still further urged to this step by the uncomfortable position in which he had found himself of late in the capital. Several functionaries had recently been sent from the mother country for the ostensible purpose of administering the colonial revenues. But they served as spies on the general's conduct, caused him many petty annoyances, and sent back to court the most malicious reports of his purposes and proceedings. Cortés, in short, now that he was made Governor-General of the country, had less real power than when he held no legal commission at all.

The Spanish force which he took with him did not probably exceed a hundred horse and forty or perhaps fifty foot; to which were added about three

¹ *Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.*

thousand Indian auxiliaries.² Among them were Guatemozin and the cacique of Tacuba, with a few others of highest rank, whose consideration with their countrymen would make them an obvious nucleus round which disaffection might gather. The general's personal retinue consisted of several pages, young men of good family, and among them Montejo, the future conqueror of Yucatan; a butler and steward; several musicians, dancers, jugglers, and buffoons, showing, it might seem, more of the effeminacy of an Oriental satrap than the hardy valor of a Spanish cavalier.³ Yet the imputation of effeminacy is sufficiently disproved by the terrible march which he accomplished.

Towards the end of October, 1524, Cortés began his march. As he descended the sides of the Cordilleras, he was met by many of his old companions in arms, who greeted their commander with a hearty welcome, and some of them left their estates to join the expedition.⁴ He halted in the province of Coatzacualco (Huazacualco) until he could receive intelligence respecting his route from the natives of Tabasco. They furnished him with a map, exhibiting the principal places whither the Indian traders who wandered over these wild regions were in the habit of resorting. With the aid of this map,

² *Carta de Albornos*, MS., Mexico, Dec. 15, 1525.—*Carta Quinta de Cortés*, MS.—The authorities do not precisely agree as to the numbers, which were changing, probably, with every step of their march across the table-land.

³ *Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 175.

⁴ Among these was Captain Diaz, who, however, left the pleasant farm, which he occupied in the province of Coatzacualco, with a very ill grace, to accompany the expedition. "But Cortés commanded it, and we dared not say no," says the veteran. *Ibid.*, cap. 174.

a compass, and such guides as from time to time he could pick up on his journey, he proposed to traverse that broad and level tract which forms the base of Yucatan and spreads from the Coatza-cualco River to the head of the Gulf of Honduras. "I shall give your Majesty," he begins his celebrated Letter to the emperor, describing this expedition, "an account, as usual, of the most remarkable events of my journey, every one of which might form the subject of a separate narration." Cortés did not exaggerate.⁵

⁵ This celebrated Letter, which has never been published, is usually designated as the *Carta Quinta*, or "Fifth Letter," of Cortés. It is nearly as long as the longest of the printed letters of the Conqueror, is written in the same clear, simple, business-like manner, and is as full of interest as any of the preceding. It gives a minute account of the expedition to Honduras, together with events that occurred in the year following. It bears no date, but was probably written in that year from Mexico. The original manuscript is in the Imperial Library at Vienna, which, as the German sceptre was swayed at that time by the same hand which held the Castilian, contains many documents of value for the illustration of Spanish history.*

* [It is scarcely credible that a long and important document in an official form should have borne no date, and we may therefore suspect that the manuscript at Vienna, if unmutilated, is *not* the original. A copy in the Royal Library at Madrid, purporting to have been made "from the original" by Alonso Diaz, terminates as follows: "De la cibdad de Temixtitán, desta Nueva España á tres del mes de setiembre del nascimiento de nuestro Señor é Salvador Jesu-Cristo de 1526." This date is confirmed by a passage in a letter which will be found cited in the notes in the next chapter with the date of Sept. 11, but of which there are in fact two originals, the duplicate being dated Sept. 3. It gives a summary, for the emperor's own perusal, of the matters narrated at length in the *Carta Quinta*, which it thus describes: "Así mesmo envio agora á V. M. con lo presente una relacion bien larga y particular de todo lo que me subcedió en el camino que hice á las Hibueras, y al cabo della hago saber á V. M. muy por extenso lo que ha pasado y se ha hecho en esta Nueva España despues que yo parté de la isla de Cuba para ella." See Col. de Doc. inéd. para la Historia de España, tom. i.—K.]

The beginning of the march lay across a low and marshy level, intersected by numerous little streams, which form the head-waters of the Rio de Tabasco, and of the other rivers that discharge themselves, to the north, into the Mexican Gulf. The smaller streams they forded, or passed in canoes, suffering their horses to swim across as they held them by the bridle. Rivers of more formidable size they crossed on floating bridges. It gives one some idea of the difficulties they had to encounter in this way, when it is stated that the Spaniards were obliged to construct no less than fifty of these bridges in a distance of less than a hundred miles!⁶ One of them was more than nine hundred paces in length. Their troubles were much augmented by the difficulty of obtaining subsistence, as the natives frequently set fire to their villages on their approach, leaving to the way-worn adventurers only a pile of smoking ruins.

It would be useless to encumber the page with the names of Indian towns which lay in the route of the army, but which may be now obsolete, and, at all events, have never found their way into a map of the country.⁷ The first considerable place

⁶ "Es tierra mui baja y de muchas sienegas, tanto que en tiempo de invierno no se puede andar, ni se sirve sino en canoas, y con pasarla yo en tiempo de seca, desde la entrada hasta la salida de ella, que puede aver veinti leguas, se hizieron mas de cincuenta puentes, que sin se hazer fuera imposible pasar." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

⁷ I have examined some of the most ancient maps of the country, by Spanish, French, and Dutch cosmographers, in order to determine the route of Cortés. An inestimable collection of these maps, made by the learned German Ebeling, is to be found in the library of Harvard University. I can detect on them only four or five of the places indicated by the general. They are the places mentioned

which they reached was Iztapan, pleasantly situated in the midst of a fruitful region, on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Rio de Tabasco. Such was the extremity to which the Spaniards had already, in the course of a few weeks, been reduced by hunger and fatigue, that the sight of a village in these dreary solitudes was welcomed by his followers, says Cortés, "with a shout of joy that was echoed back from all the surrounding woods." The army was now at no great distance from the ancient city of Palenque, the subject of so much speculation in our time. The village of *Las Tres Cruzes*, indeed, situated between twenty and thirty miles from Palenque, is said still to commemorate the passage of the Conquerors by the existence of three crosses which they left there. Yet no allusion is made to the ancient capital. Was it then the abode of a populous and flourishing community, such as once occupied it, to judge from the extent and magnificence of its remains? Or was it, even then, a heap of mouldering ruins, buried in a wilderness of vegetation, and thus hidden from the knowledge of the surrounding country? If the former, the silence of Cortés is not easy to be explained.

On quitting Iztapan, the Spaniards struck across a country having the same character of a low and marshy soil, checkered by occasional patches of cultivation, and covered with forests of cedar and Brazil wood, which seemed absolutely interminable. The overhanging foliage threw so

in the text, and, though few, may serve to show the general direction of the march of the army.

deep a shade that, as Cortés says, the soldiers could not see where to set their feet.⁸ To add to their perplexity, their guides deserted them; and, when they climbed to the summits of the tallest trees, they could see only the same cheerless, interminable line of waving woods. The compass and the map furnished the only clue to extricate them from this gloomy labyrinth; and Cortés and his officers, among whom was the constant Sandoval, spreading out their chart on the ground, anxiously studied the probable direction of their route. Their scanty supplies meanwhile had entirely failed them, and they appeased the cravings of appetite by such roots as they dug out of the earth, or by the nuts and berries that grew wild in the woods. Numbers fell sick, and many of the Indians sank by the way, and died of absolute starvation.

When at length the troops emerged from these dismal forests, their path was crossed by a river of great depth, and far wider than any which they had hitherto traversed. The soldiers, disheartened, broke out into murmurs against their leader, who was plunging them deeper and deeper in a boundless wilderness, where they must lay their bones. It was in vain that Cortés encouraged them to construct a floating bridge, which might take them to the opposite bank of the river. It seemed a work of appalling magnitude, to which their wasted strength was unequal. He was more successful in his appeal to the Indian auxiliaries, till his own

⁸ “Donde se ponian los pies en el suelo aña arriba la claridad del cielo no se veia, tanta era la espesura y alteza de los árboles, que aunque se subian en algunos, no podian descubrir un tiro de piedra.” Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

men, put to shame by the ready obedience of the latter, engaged in the work with a hearty good will, which enabled them, although ready to drop from fatigue, to accomplish it at the end of four days. It was, indeed, the only expedient by which they could hope to extricate themselves from their perilous situation. The bridge consisted of one thousand pieces of timber, each of the thickness of a man's body and full sixty feet long.⁹ When we consider that the timber was all standing in the forest at the commencement of the labor, it must be admitted to have been an achievement worthy of the Spaniards. The well-compacted beams presented a solid structure which nothing, says Cortés, but fire could destroy. It excited the admiration of the natives, who came from a great distance to see it; and "the bridge of Cortés" remained for many a year the enduring monument of that commander's energy and perseverance.

The arrival of the army on the opposite bank of the river involved them in new difficulties. The ground was so soft and saturated with water that the horses floundered up to their girths, and, sometimes plunging into quagmires, were nearly buried in the mud. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could be extricated by covering the wet soil with the foliage and the boughs of trees, when a stream of water, which forced its way through the heart of the morass, furnished the jaded animals with the means of effecting their escape by swim-

⁹ "Porque lleva mas que mil bigas, que la menor es casi tan gorda como un cuerpo de un hombre, y de nueve y diez brazas en largo." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

ming.¹⁰ As the Spaniards emerged from these slimy depths, they came on a broad and rising ground, which, by its cultivated fields teeming with maize, *agi*, or pepper of the country, and the *yuca* plant, intimated their approach to the capital of the fruitful province of Aculan. It was in the beginning of Lent, 1525, a period memorable for an event of which I shall give the particulars from the narrative of Cortés.

The general at this place was informed, by one of the Indian converts in his train, that a conspiracy had been set on foot by Guatemozin, with the cacique of Tacuba, and some other of the principal Indian nobles, to massacre the Spaniards. They would seize the moment when the army should be entangled in the passage of some defile, or some frightful morass like that from which it had just escaped, where, taken at disadvantage, it could be easily overpowered by the superior number of the Mexicans. After the slaughter of the troops, the Indians would continue their march to Honduras and cut off the Spanish settlements there. Their success would lead to a rising in the

¹⁰ "Pasada toda la gente y caballos de la otra parte del alcondimós luego en una gran çienega, que durava bien tres tiros de ballesta, la cosa mas espantosa que jamas las gentes viéron, donde todos los caballos desençillados se sumiéron hasta las orejas sin parecerse otra cosa, y querer forçear á salir, sumianse mas, de manera que allí perdimos toda la esperanza de poder escapar caballos ningunos, pero todavía comenzámos á trabajar y componerles haces de yerba y ramas grandes de bajo, sobre que se sostuviesen y no se sumiesen, remediávanse algo, y andando trabajando y yendo y viniendo de la una parte á la otra, abrióse por medio de un calejón de agua y çieno, que los caballos comenzaron algo á nadar, y con esto plugo á nuestro Señor que salieron todos sin peligro ninguno." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

capital, and, indeed, throughout the land, until every Spaniard should be exterminated, and the vessels in the ports be seized, and secured from carrying the tidings across the waters.

No sooner had Cortés learned the particulars of this formidable plot than he arrested Guatemozin and the principal Aztec lords in his train. The latter admitted the fact of the conspiracy, but alleged that it had been planned by Guatemozin and that they had refused to come into it. Guatemozin and the chief of Tacuba neither admitted nor denied the truth of the accusation, but maintained a dogged silence. Such is the statement of Cortés.¹¹ Bernal Diaz, however, who was present in the expedition, assures us that both Guatemozin and the cacique of Tacuba declared their innocence. They had indeed, they said, talked more than once together of the sufferings they were then enduring, and had said that death was preferable to seeing so many of their poor followers dying daily around them. They admitted, also, that a project for rising on the Spaniards had been discussed by some of the Aztecs; but Guatemozin had discouraged it from the first, and no scheme of the kind could have been put into execution without his knowledge and consent.¹² These protestations did not avail the unfortunate princes; and Cortés, having satisfied, or affected to satisfy, himself of their guilt, ordered them to immediate execution.

When brought to the fatal tree, Guatemozin displayed the intrepid spirit worthy of his better days.

¹¹ *Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.*

¹² *Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 177.*

“ I knew what it was,” said he, “ to trust to your false promises, Malinche; I knew that you had destined me to this fate, since I did not fall by my own hand when you entered my city of Tenochtitlan. Why do you slay me so unjustly? God will demand it of you!”¹³ The cacique of Tacuba, protesting his innocence, declared that he desired no better lot than to die by the side of his lord. The unfortunate princes, with one or more inferior nobles (for the number is uncertain), were then executed by being hung from the huge branches of a *ceiba*-tree which overshadowed the road.¹⁴

Such was the sad end of Guatemozin, the last emperor of the Aztecs, if we might not rather call him “ the last of the Aztecs; ” since from this time, broken in spirit and without a head, the remnant of the nation resigned itself, almost without a struggle, to the stern yoke of its oppressors. Among all the names of barbarian princes, there are few entitled to a higher place on the roll of fame than that of Guatemozin. He was young, and his public career was not long; but it was glorious. He was called to the throne in the convulsed and expiring hours of the monarchy, when the banded nations of Anahuac and the fierce Euro-

¹³ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, ubi supra.

¹⁴ According to Diaz, both Guatemozin and the prince of Tacuba had embraced the religion of their conquerors, and were confessed by a Franciscan friar before their execution. We are further assured by the same authority that “ they were, *for Indians*, very good Christians, and believed well and truly.” (*Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*) One is reminded of the last hours of Caupolican, converted to Christianity by the same men who tied him to the stake. See the scene, painted in the frightful coloring of a master-hand, in the *Araucana*, Canto 34.

pean were thundering at the gates of the capital. It was a post of tremendous responsibility; but Guatemozin's conduct fully justified the choice of him to fill it. No one can refuse his admiration to the intrepid spirit which could prolong a defence of his city while one stone was left upon another; and our sympathies, for the time, are inevitably thrown more into the scale of the rude chieftain, thus battling for his country's freedom, than into that of his civilized and successful antagonist.¹⁵

In reviewing the circumstances of Guatemozin's death, one cannot attach much weight to the charge of conspiracy brought against him. That the Indians, brooding over their wrongs and present sufferings, should have sometimes talked of revenge, would not be surprising. But that any chimerical scheme of an insurrection, like that above mentioned, should have been set on foot, or even sanctioned, by Guatemozin, is altogether improbable. That prince's explanation of the affair, as given by Diaz, is, to say the least, quite as deserving of credit as the accusation of the Indian informer.¹⁶ The defect of testimony and the distance of time

¹⁵ Guatemozin's beautiful wife, the princess Tecuichpo, the daughter of Montezuma, lived long enough after his death to give her hand to four Castilians, all of noble descent. (See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 155, note 36.) She is described as having been as well instructed in the Catholic faith as any woman in Castile, as most gracious and winning in her deportment, and as having contributed greatly, by her example, and the deference with which she inspired the Aztecs, to the tranquillity of the conquered country. This pleasing portrait, it may be well enough to mention, is by the hand of her husband, Don Thoan Cano. See Appendix, No. 11.

¹⁶ The Indian chroniclers regard the pretended conspiracy of Guatemozin as an invention of Cortés. The informer himself, when afterwards put to the torture by the cacique of Tezcuco, declared

make it difficult for us, at the present day, to decide the question. We have a surer criterion of the truth in the opinion of those who were eye-witnesses of the transaction. It is given in the words of the old chronicler so often quoted. "The execution of Guatemozin," says Diaz, "was most unjust, and was thought wrong by all of us."¹⁷

The most probable explanation of the affair seems to be that Guatemozin was a troublesome and, indeed, formidable captive. Thus much is intimated by Cortés himself, in his Letter to the emperor.¹⁸ The fallen sovereign of Mexico, by the ascendancy of his character, as well as by his previous station, maintained an influence over his countrymen which would have enabled him with a breath, as it were, to rouse their smothered, not extinguished, animosity into rebellion. The Spaniards, during the first years after the Conquest, lived in constant apprehension of a rising of the Aztecs. This is evident from numerous passages in the writings of the time. It was under the same apprehension that Cortés consented to embarrass himself with his royal captive on this dreary expedition. And in such distrust did he hold him that, even while in Mexico, he neither rode abroad, nor

that he had made no revelation of this nature to the Spanish commander. Ixtlilxochitl vouches for the truth of this story. (*Venida de los Españoles*, pp. 83-93.) But who will vouch for Ixtlilxochitl?

¹⁷ "Y fué esta muerte que les diéron muy injustamente dada, y pareció mal á todos los que ibamos aquella jornada." *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 177.

¹⁸ "Guatemozin, Señor que fué de esta Ciudad de Temixtitán, á quien yo despues que la gané he tenido siempre preso, teniéndole por hombre bullicioso, y le llevé conmigo." *Carta Quinta*, MS.

walked to any great distance, according to Gomara, without being attended by Guatemozin.¹⁹

Parties standing in such relations to each other could have been the objects only of mutual distrust and aversion. The forlorn condition of the Spaniards on the present march, which exposed them in a peculiar degree to any sudden assault from their wily Indian vassals, increased the suspicions of Cortés. Thus predisposed to think ill of Guatemozin, the general lent a ready ear to the first accusation against him. Charges were converted into proofs, and condemnation followed close upon the charges. By a single blow he proposed to rid himself and the state forever of a dangerous enemy,—the more dangerous, that he was an enemy in disguise. Had he but consulted his own honor and his good name, Guatemozin's head was the last on which he should have suffered an injury to fall. "He should have cherished him," to borrow the homely simile of his encomiast, Gomara, "like gold in a napkin, as the best trophy of his victories."²⁰

Whatever may have been the real motives of his conduct in this affair, it seems to have left the mind of Cortés but ill at ease. For a long time he was moody and irritable, and found it difficult to sleep at night. On one occasion, as he was pacing an upper chamber of a *teocalli* in which he was quartered, he missed his footing in the dark, and

¹⁹ "Y le hacian aquella misma reverencia, i ceremonias, que á Motecuma, i creo que por eso le llevaba siempre consigo por la Ciudad á Caballo si cavalgaba, i sino á pie como él iba." Crónica, cap. 170.

²⁰ "I Cortés debiera guardarlo vivo, como Oro en paño, que era el triumpho, i gloria de sus Victorias." Crónica, cap. 170.

was precipitated from a height of some twelve feet to the ground, which occasioned him a severe concussion on the head,—a thing too palpable to be concealed, though he endeavored, says the gossiping Diaz, to hide the knowledge of it, as well as he could, from the soldiers.²¹

It was not long after the sad scene of Guatemozin's execution that the wearied troops entered the head town of the great province of Aculan; a thriving community of traders, who carried on a profitable traffic with the farthest quarters of Central America. Cortés notices in general terms the excellence and beauty of the buildings, and the hospitable reception which he experienced from the inhabitants.

After renewing their strength in these comfortable quarters, the Spaniards left the capital of Aculan, the name of which is to be found on no map, and held on their toilsome way in the direction of what is now called the Lake of Peten. It was then the property of an emigrant tribe of the hardy Maya family, and their capital stood on an island in the lake, "with its houses and lofty *teocallis* glistening in the sun," says Bernal Diaz, "so that it might be seen for the distance of two leagues."²² These edifices, built by one of the races of Yucatan, displayed, doubtless, the same peculiarities of construction as the remains still to be seen in that remarkable peninsula. But, whatever may have been their architectural merits, they are disposed of in a brief sentence by the Conquerors.

²¹ Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.

²² Ibid., cap. 178.

The inhabitants of the island showed a friendly spirit, and a docility unlike the warlike temper of their countrymen of Yucatan. They willingly listened to the Spanish missionaries who accompanied the expedition, as they expounded the Christian doctrines through the intervention of Marina. The Indian interpreter was present throughout this long march, the last in which she remained at the side of Cortés. As this, too, is the last occasion on which she will appear in these pages, I will mention, before parting with her, an interesting circumstance that occurred when the army was traversing the province of Coatzacualco. This, it may be remembered, was the native country of Marina, where her infamous mother sold her, when a child, to some foreign traders, in order to secure her inheritance to a younger brother. Cortés halted for some days at this place, to hold a conference with the surrounding caciques on matters of government and religion. Among those summoned to this meeting was Marina's mother, who came, attended by her son. No sooner did they make their appearance than all were struck with the great resemblance of the cacique to her daughter. The two parties recognized each other, though they had not met since their separation. The mother, greatly terrified, fancied that she had been decoyed into a snare in order to punish her inhuman conduct. But Marina instantly ran up to her, and endeavored to allay her fears, assuring her that she should receive no harm, and, addressing the bystanders, said "that she was sure her mother knew not what she did when she sold her to the traders,

and that she forgave her." Then, tenderly embracing her unnatural parent, she gave her such jewels and other little ornaments as she wore about her own person, to win back, as it would seem, her lost affection. Marina added that "she felt much happier than before, now that she had been instructed in the Christian faith and given up the bloody worship of the Aztecs."²³

In the course of the expedition to Honduras, Cortés gave Marina away to a Castilian knight, Don Juan Xaramillo,²⁴ to whom she was wedded as his lawful wife. She had estates assigned to her in her native province, where she probably passed the remainder of her days.²⁵ From this time the name of Marina disappears from the page of history. But it has been always held in grateful remembrance by the Spaniards, for the important aid which she gave them in effecting the Conquest,

²³ Diaz, who was present, attests the truth of this account by the most solemn adjuration: "Y todo esto que digo, se lo of muy certificadamente y se lo juro, amen." *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 37.

²⁴ [Alaman, from an examination of the municipal archives of Mexico, finds that Juan de Jaramillo was commander of one of the brigantines in the siege of Mexico. He subsequently filled the office of royal standard-bearer of the city, and was several times chosen to represent it in the assemblies of the cities of New Spain. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 269.]

²⁵ [The Spanish government showed its sense of the services of Marina by the grant of several estates both in the town and country. The house in which she usually resided in Mexico was in the street of Medinas, as it is now called, which then bore the name of her husband, Jaramillo. She had a pleasure-house at Chapoltepec, and in Cuyoacan a garden that had belonged to Montezuma. She lived in the enjoyment of wealth and much consideration from her countrymen; and, as we see mention made of her grandchild during her lifetime, we may presume she reached a good old age. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 269.—Alaman, *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. ii. p. 293.]

and by the natives, for the kindness and sympathy which she showed them in their misfortunes. Many an Indian ballad commemorates the gentle virtues of Malinche,—her Aztec epithet. Even now her spirit, if report be true, watches over the capital which she helped to win; and the peasant is occasionally startled by the apparition of an Indian princess, dimly seen through the evening shadows, as it flits among the groves and grottos of the royal Hill of Chapoltepec.²⁶

By the Conqueror, Marina left one son, Don Martin Cortés. He rose to high consideration, and was made a *comendador* of the order of St. Jago. He was subsequently suspected of treasonable designs against the government; and neither his parents' extraordinary services, nor his own deserts, could protect him from a cruel persecution; and in 1568 the son of Hernando Cortés was shamefully subjected to the torture in the very capital which his father had acquired for the Castilian crown!

The inhabitants of the isles of Peten—to return from our digression—listened attentively to the preaching of the Franciscan friars, and consented to the instant demolition of their idols, and the erection of the Cross upon their ruins.²⁷ A singular circumstance showed the value of these hurried conversions. Cortés, on his departure, left

²⁶ Life in Mexico, let. 8.—The fair author does not pretend to have been favored with a sight of the apparition.

²⁷ Villagutierrez says that the Iztacs, by which name the inhabitants of these islands were called, did not destroy their idols while the Spaniards remained there. (Historia de la Conquista de la Provincia de el Itza (Madrid, 1701), pp. 49, 50.) The historian is wrong, since Cortés expressly asserts that the images were broken and burnt in his presence. Carta Quinta, MS.

among this friendly people one of his horses, which had been disabled by an injury in the foot. The Indians felt a reverence for the animal, as in some way connected with the mysterious power of the white men. When their visitors had gone, they offered flowers to the horse, and, as it is said, prepared for him many savory messes of poultry, such as they would have administered to their own sick. Under this extraordinary diet the poor animal pined away and died. The affrighted Indians raised his effigy in stone, and, placing it in one of their *teocallis*, did homage to it, as to a deity. In 1618, when two Franciscan friars came to preach the gospel in these regions, then scarcely better known to the Spaniards than before the time of Cortés, one of the most remarkable objects which they found was this statue of a horse, receiving the homage of the Indian worshippers, as the god of thunder and lightning! ²⁸

It would be wearisome to recount all the perils and hardships endured by the Spaniards in the remainder of their journey. It would be repeating only the incidents of the preceding narrative, the same obstacles in their path, the same extremities of famine and fatigue,—hardships more wearing on the spirits than encounters with an enemy, which, if more hazardous, are also more exciting. It is easier to contend with man than with Nature. Yet I must not omit to mention the passage of the *Sierra de los Pedernales*, “the Mountain of Flints,” which, though only twenty-four miles in

²⁸ The fact is recorded by Villagutierre, *Conquista de el Itza*, pp. 100-102, and Cojullado, *Hist. de Yucathan*, lib. 1, cap. 16.

extent, consumed no less than twelve days in crossing it! The sharp stones cut the horses' feet to pieces, while many were lost down the precipices and ravines; so that when they had reached the opposite side sixty-eight of these valuable animals had perished, and the remainder were, for the most part, in an unserviceable condition!²⁹

The rainy season had now set in, and torrents of water, falling day and night, drenched the adventurers to the skin, and added greatly to their distresses. The rivers, swollen beyond their usual volume, poured along with a terrible impetuosity that defied the construction of bridges; and it was with the greatest difficulty that by laying trunks of trees from one huge rock to another, with which these streams were studded, they effected a perilous passage to the opposite banks.³⁰

At length the shattered train drew near the Golfo Dolce, at the head of the Bay of Honduras. Their route could not have been far from the site of Copan, the celebrated city whose architectural ruins have furnished such noble illustrations for the pencil of Catherwood. But the Spaniards passed on in silence. Nor, indeed, can we wonder

²⁹ "Y querer dezir la aspereza y fragosidad de este Puerto y sierras, ni quien lo dixese lo sabria significar, ni quien lo oyese podria entender, sino que sepa V. M. que en ocho leguas que duró hasta este puerto estuvimos en las andar doce dias, digo los postreros en llegar al cabo de él, en que muriéron sesenta y ocho caballos despeñados y desxaretados, y todos los demas viniéron heridos y tan lastimados que no pensámos aprovecharnos de ninguno." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

³⁰ "If any unhappy wretch had become giddy in this transit," says Cortés, "he must inevitably have been precipitated into the gulf and perished. There were upwards of twenty of these frightful passes." Carta Quinta, MS.

that at this stage of the enterprise they should have passed on without heeding the vicinity of a city in the wilderness, though it were as glorious as the capital of Zenobia; for they were arrived almost within view of the Spanish settlements, the object of their long and wearisome pilgrimage.

The place which they were now approaching was Naco, or San Gil de Buena Vista, a Spanish settlement on the Golfo Dolce. Cortés advanced cautiously, prepared to fall on the town by surprise. He had held on his way with the undeviating step of the North American Indian, who, traversing morass and mountain and the most intricate forests, guided by the instinct of revenge, presses straight towards the mark, and, when he has reached it, springs at once on his unsuspecting victim. Before Cortés made his assault, his scouts fortunately fell in with some of the inhabitants of the place, from whom they received tidings of the death of Olid, and of the re-establishment of his own authority. Cortés, therefore, entered the place like a friend, and was cordially welcomed by his countrymen, greatly astonished, says Diaz, "by the presence among them of the general so renowned throughout these countries."³¹

The colony was at this time sorely suffering from famine; and to such extremity was it soon reduced that the troops would probably have found a grave in the very spot to which they had looked forward as the goal of their labors, but for the sea-

³¹ "Espantáronse en gran manera, y como supiéron que era Cortés q̄ tan nombrado era en todas estas partes de las Indias, y en Castilla, no sabiā que se hazer de placer." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 179.

sonable arrival of a vessel with supplies from Cuba. With a perseverance which nothing could daunt, Cortés made an examination of the surrounding country, and occupied a month more in exploring dismal swamps, steaming with unwholesome exhalations, and infected with bilious fevers and with swarms of venomous insects which left peace neither by day nor night. At length he embarked with a part of his forces on board of two brigantines, and, after touching at one or two ports in the bay, anchored off Truxillo, the principal Spanish settlement on that coast. The surf was too high for him easily to effect a landing; but the inhabitants, overjoyed at his arrival, rushed into the shallow water and eagerly bore back the general in their arms to the shore.³²

After he had restored the strength and spirits of his men, the indefatigable commander prepared for a new expedition, the object of which was to explore and to reduce the extensive province of Nicaragua. One may well feel astonished at the adventurous spirit of the man who, unsubdued by the terrible sufferings of his recent march, should so soon be prepared for another enterprise equally appalling. It is difficult, in this age of sober sense, to conceive the character of a Castilian cavalier of the sixteenth century, a true counterpart of which it would not have been easy to find in any other nation, even at that time,—or anywhere, indeed, save in those tales of chivalry, which, however wild and extravagant they may seem, were much more

³² Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 179, et seq.—Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 3, lib. 8, cap. 3, 4.—*Carta Quinta de Cortés*, MS.

true to character than to situation. The mere excitement of exploring the strange and the unknown was a sufficient compensation to the Spanish adventurer for all his toils and trials. It seems to have been ordered by Providence that such a race of men should exist contemporaneously with the discovery of the New World, that those regions should be brought to light which were beset with dangers and difficulties so appalling as might have tended to overawe and to discourage the ordinary spirit of adventure. Yet Cortés, though filled with this spirit, proposed nobler ends to himself than those of the mere vulgar adventurer. In the expedition to Nicaragua he designed, as he had done in that to Honduras, to ascertain the resources of the country in general, and, above all, the existence of any means of communication between the great oceans on its borders. If none such existed, it would at least establish this fact, the knowledge of which, to borrow his own language, was scarcely less important.

The general proposed to himself the further object of enlarging the colonial empire of Castile. The conquest of Mexico was but the commencement of a series of conquests. To the warrior who had achieved this, nothing seemed impracticable; and scarcely would anything have been so, had he been properly sustained. It is no great stretch of imagination to see the Conqueror of Mexico advancing along the provinces of the vast Isthmus,—Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Darien,—until he had planted his victorious banner on the shores of the Gulf of Panamá; and, while it was there fanned by

the breezes from the golden South, the land of the Incas, to see him gathering such intelligence of this land as would stimulate him to carry his arms still farther, and to anticipate, it might be, the splendid career of Pizarro!

But from these dreams of ambition Cortés was suddenly aroused by such tidings as convinced him that his absence from Mexico was already too far prolonged, and that he must return without delay, if he would save the capital or the country.

CHAPTER IV

DISTURBANCES IN MEXICO—RETURN OF CORTÉS—
DISTRUST OF THE COURT—CORTÉS RETURNS TO
SPAIN—DEATH OF SANDOVAL—BRILLIANT RE-
CEPTION OF CORTÉS—HONORS CONFERRED ON
HIM

1526-1530

THE intelligence alluded to in the preceding chapter was conveyed in a letter to Cortés from the licentiate Zuazo, one of the functionaries to whom the general had committed the administration of the country during his absence. It contained full particulars of the tumultuous proceedings in the capital. No sooner had Cortés quitted it, than dissensions broke out among the different members of the provisional government. The misrule increased as his absence was prolonged. At length tidings were received that Cortés with his whole army had perished in the morasses of Chiapa. The members of the government showed no reluctance to credit this story. They now openly paraded their own authority; proclaimed the general's death; caused funeral ceremonies to be performed in his honor; took possession of his property wherever they could meet with it, piously devoting a small part of the proceeds to purchasing

masses for his soul, while the remainder was appropriated to pay off what was called his debt to the state. They seized, in like manner, the property of other individuals engaged in the expedition. From these outrages they proceeded to others against the Spanish residents in the city, until the Franciscan missionaries left the capital in disgust, while the Indian population were so sorely oppressed that great apprehensions were entertained of a general rising. Zuazo, who communicated these tidings, implored Cortés to quicken his return. He was a temperate man, and the opposition which he had made to the tyrannical measures of his comrades had been rewarded with exile.¹

The general, greatly alarmed by this account, saw that no alternative was left but to abandon all further schemes of conquest, and to return at once, if he would secure the preservation of the empire which he had won. He accordingly made the necessary arrangements for settling the administration of the colonies at Honduras, and embarked with a small number of followers for Mexico.

He had not been long at sea when he encountered such a terrible tempest as seriously damaged his vessel and compelled him to return to port and refit. A second attempt proved equally unsuccessful; and Cortés, feeling that his good star had deserted him, saw in this repeated disaster an intimation from Heaven that he was not to return.² He contented himself, therefore, with sending a trusty

¹ Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 185.—Relacion del Tesorero Strada, MS., México, 1526.

² Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

messenger to advise his friends of his personal safety in Honduras. He then instituted processions and public prayers to ascertain the will of Heaven and to deprecate its anger. His health now showed the effects of his recent sufferings, and declined under a wasting fever. His spirits sank with it, and he fell into a state of gloomy despondency. Bernal Diaz, speaking of him at this time, says that nothing could be more wan and emaciated than his person, and that so strongly was he possessed with the idea of his approaching end that he procured a Franciscan habit,—for it was common to be laid out in the habit of some one or other of the monastic orders,—in which to be carried to the grave.³

From this deplorable apathy Cortés was roused by fresh advices urging his presence in Mexico, and by the judicious efforts of his good friend Sandoval, who had lately returned, himself, from an excursion into the interior. By his persuasion, the general again consented to try his fortunes on the seas. He embarked on board of a brigantine, with a few followers, and bade adieu to the disastrous shores of Honduras, April 25, 1526. He had nearly made the coast of New Spain, when a heavy gale threw him off his course and drove him to the island of Cuba. After staying there some time to recruit his exhausted strength, he again put to sea, on the 16th of May, and in eight days landed near San Juan de Ulua, whence he proceeded about five leagues on foot to Medellin.

³ Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 184, et seq.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

Cortés was so much changed by disease that his person was not easily recognized. But no sooner was it known that the general had returned than crowds of people, white men and natives, thronged from all the neighboring country to welcome him. The tidings spread far and wide on the wings of the wind, and his progress to the capital was a triumphal procession. The inhabitants came from the distance of eighty leagues to have a sight of him; and they congratulated one another on the presence of the only man who could rescue the country from its state of anarchy. It was a resurrection of the dead,—so industriously had the reports of his death been circulated, and so generally believed.⁴

At all the great towns where he halted he was sumptuously entertained. Triumphal arches were thrown across the road, and the streets were strewed with flowers as he passed. After a night's repose at Tezcoco, he made his entrance in great state into the capital. The municipality came out to welcome him, and a brilliant cavalcade of armed citizens formed his escort; while the lake was covered with barges of the Indians, all fancifully decorated with their gala dresses, as on the day of his first arrival among them. The streets echoed to music, and dancing, and sounds of jubilee, as the procession held on its way to the great convent of St. Francis, where thanksgivings were offered up for the safe return of the general, who then pro-

⁴ *Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.*—*Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 189, 190.*—*Carta de Cortés al Emperador, MS., México, Sept. 11, 1526.*

ceeded to take up his quarters once more in his own princely residence.⁵ It was in June, 1526, when Cortés re-entered Mexico; nearly two years had elapsed since he had left it, on his difficult march to Honduras,—a march which led to no important results, but which consumed nearly as much time, and was attended with sufferings quite as severe, as the Conquest of Mexico itself.⁶

Cortés did not abuse his present advantage. He, indeed, instituted proceedings against his enemies; but he followed them up so languidly as to incur the imputation of weakness. It is the only instance in which he has been accused of weakness; and, since it was shown in redressing his own injuries, it may be thought to reflect no discredit on his character.⁷

He was not permitted long to enjoy the sweets of triumph. In the month of July he received ad-

⁵ *Carta de Ocaña, MS., Agosto 31, 1526.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.*

⁶ “What Cortés suffered,” says Dr. Robertson, “on this march,—a distance, according to Gomara, of 3000 miles” (the distance must be greatly exaggerated),—“from famine, from the hostility of the natives, from the climate, and from hardships of every species, has nothing in history parallel to it, but what occurs in the adventures of the other discoverers and conquerors of the New World. Cortés was employed in this dreadful service above two years; and, though it was not distinguished by any splendid event, he exhibited, during the course of it, greater personal courage, more fortitude of mind, more perseverance and patience, than in any other period or scene in his life.” (*Hist. of America*, note 96.) The historian’s remarks are just; as the passage which I have borrowed from the extraordinary record of the Conqueror may show. Those who are desirous of seeing something of the narrative told in his own way will find a few pages of it translated in the Appendix, No. 14.

⁷ “Y esto yo lo of dezir á los del Real Consejo de Indias, estando presente el señor Obispo Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, que se descuidó mucho Cortés en ello, y se lo tuviérón á floxedad.” Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 190.

vices of the arrival of a *juez de residencia* on the coast, sent by the court of Madrid to supersede him temporarily in the government. The crown of Castile, as its colonial empire extended, became less and less capable of watching over its administration. It was therefore obliged to place vast powers in the hands of its viceroys; and, as suspicion naturally accompanies weakness, it was ever prompt to listen to accusations against these powerful vassals. In such cases the government adopted the expedient of sending out a commissioner, or *juez de residencia*, with authority to investigate the conduct of the accused, to suspend him in the meanwhile from his office, and, after a judicial examination, to reinstate him in it or to remove him altogether, according to the issue of the trial. The enemies of Cortés had been for a long time busy in undermining his influence at court, and in infusing suspicions of his loyalty in the bosom of the emperor. Since his elevation to the government of the country they had redoubled their mischievous activity, and they assailed his character with the foulest imputations. They charged him with appropriating to his own use the gold which belonged to the crown, and especially with secreting the treasures of Montezuma. He was said to have made false reports of the provinces he had conquered, that he might defraud the exchequer of its lawful revenues. He had distributed the principal offices among his own creatures, and had acquired an unbounded influence, not only over the Spaniards, but the natives, who were all ready to do his bidding. He had expended large sums in fortify-

ing both the capital and his own palace; and it was evident, from the magnitude of his schemes and his preparations, that he designed to shake off his allegiance and to establish an independent sovereignty in New Spain.⁸

The government, greatly alarmed by these formidable charges, the probability of which they could not estimate, appointed a commissioner with full power to investigate the matter. The person selected for this delicate office was Luis Ponce de Leon, a man of high family, young for such a post, but of a mature judgment and distinguished for his moderation and equity. The nomination of such a minister gave assurance that the crown meant to do justly by Cortés.

The emperor wrote at the same time with his own hand to the general, advising him of this step, and assuring him that it was taken, not from distrust of his integrity, but to afford him the opportunity of placing that integrity in a clear light before the world.⁹

Ponce de Leon reached Mexico in July, 1526. He was received with all respect by Cortés and the municipality of the capital; and the two parties interchanged those courtesies with each other which gave augury that the future proceedings would be conducted in a spirit of harmony. Unfortunately, this fair beginning was blasted by the death of the commissioner in a few weeks after his arrival, a circumstance which did not fail to afford another item

⁸ Memorial de Luis Cárdenas, MS.—Carta de Diego de Ocaña, MS.—Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 3, lib. 8, cap. 14, 15.

⁹ Carta del Emperador, MS., Toledo, Nov. 4, 1525.

in the loathsome mass of accusation heaped upon Cortés. The commissioner fell the victim of a malignant fever, which carried off a number of those who had come over in the vessel with him.¹⁰

On his death-bed, Ponce de Leon delegated his authority to an infirm old man, who survived but a few months,* and transmitted the reins of govern-

¹⁰ Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 192.—Carta de Cortés al Emperador, MS., México, Set. 11, 1526.

* [This person, the licentiate Marcos de Aguilar, showed, during his short tenure of office, much greater zeal and activity than would be inferred from the slight mention of him by historians. Prescott has omitted to state that a principal point in the instructions given to Ponce de Leon related to the question of the *repartimientos* and other methods of treating the Indians, in regard to which he was to obtain the opinions of the authorities and other principal persons and of the Dominican and Franciscan friars. Sir Arthur Helps, who notices this fact, adds that it "led to no result," the instructions on this subject to Ponce de Leon being on his death "forgotten or laid aside." But a series of documents published by Señor Icazbalceta (Col. de Doc. para la Hist. de México, tom. ii.) shows, on the contrary, that they were promptly and fully carried out by Aguilar, who considered this to be the principal business of the commission, and one, as he wrote to the emperor, requiring despatch, since the very existence of the native population depended on immediate action. He accordingly consulted all the officials, Cortés himself included, the other chief residents of the city, such as Alvarado and Sandoval, and the members of the two religious orders, obtaining written opinions, individual as well as collective, which he transmitted with his own report to the emperor. The great majority of the persons consulted, including all the monks, while differing on some matters of detail, concurred in urging the necessity of the *repartimientos* and in recommending that they should be made hereditary.

The same result followed an inquiry instituted in 1532 and the following years. Among the opinions delivered on that occasion is one deserving of particular notice, both for the manner in which it is enforced and the character of the writer,—Fray Domingo de Banzos, whose career has been agreeably sketched, though his views on the present matter have been misapprehended, by Sir Arthur Helps. The three objects to be kept in view, he begins by remarking, are the good treatment and preservation of the natives, the establishment and security of the Spanish settlers, and the augmentation

ment to a person named Estrada, or Strada, the royal treasurer, one of the officers sent from Spain

of the royal revenues. The proper means to be adopted are also threefold: the *repartimientos* extended and perpetuated, the abandonment of the idea of reserving certain *pueblos* to be held by the crown and managed by its officers, and the appointment of good governors, since the best measures are of no avail if not ably administered. The objections to the crown's reserving any *pueblos* for itself are, that the officers will be employed solely in collecting the tribute, the Indians will receive no protection or religious instruction, and the cultivation of the soil will be always degenerating, since no one will have an interest in maintaining or improving its condition. The *repartimientos*, on the contrary, by giving the holders a direct interest in the better cultivation of the soil and the increase of the people, will insure both these results; and though under this system the royal revenues may be diminished for a time, they will in the end be greatly augmented through the general improvement of the country. The great misfortune has been that the authorities at home pursue a policy which directly contravenes their own intentions: wishing to benefit, they destroy; wishing to enrich, they impoverish; wishing to save the Indians, they exterminate them. There is needed a man with the mind and resolution of Charlemagne or Cæsar, to adopt a plan and carry it out. Instead of this, the course pursued is that of endless changes and experiments like a perpetual litigation. It is a sure sign that God intends destruction when men are unable to find a remedy. In the present case, well-meaning and holy men have sought one in vain. In his opinion, which he knows will be unheeded, the system which has in it the least evil and the most good is that of hereditary *repartimientos*, which should be established once for all. In a later letter he says, "The person least deceived about the affairs of this country is I, who know its fate as if I saw it with my eyes and touched it with my hands." He predicts the extermination of the Indians within fifty years. He has always believed and asserted that they would perish, and the laws and measures founded on any other supposition have all been bad. The wonderful thing is, he remarks, with an apparent allusion to Las Casas, that the men of greatest sanctity and zeal for good are those who have done the most harm. (Icazbalceta, Col. de Doc. para la Hist. de México, tom. ii.) That the prediction of Batanzos has been falsified by the event may be attributed to a variety of causes: the vastness of the country and the comparative density of the native population; the social and industrial habits of the latter, so different from those of more northern tribes; the decline of the Spanish power and of that spirit of conquest which, by keeping up a constant stream of emigration and ardor of enterprise, might have led to a conflict of races; and the sedulous protec-

to take charge of the finances, and who was personally hostile to Cortés. The Spanish residents would have persuaded Cortés to assert for himself at least an equal share of the authority, to which they considered Estrada as having no sufficient title. But the general, with singular moderation, declined a competition in this matter, and determined to abide a more decided expression of his sovereign's will. To his mortification, the nomination of Estrada was confirmed; and this dignitary soon contrived to inflict on his rival all those annoyances by which a little mind in possession of unexpected power endeavors to assert superiority over a great one. The recommendations of Cortés were disregarded, his friends mortified and insulted, his attendants outraged by injuries. One of the domestics of his friend Sandoval, for some slight offence, was sentenced to lose his hand; and when the general remonstrated against these acts of violence he was peremptorily commanded to leave the city! The Spaniards, indignant at this outrage, would have taken up arms in his defence; but Cortés would allow no resistance, and, simply remarking

tion afforded to the Indians by the government and the church. Their welfare was the object of constant investigation and a long series of enactments. Slavery was in their case entirely abolished. The *repartimientos* were made hereditary, but the rights and power of the *encomenderos* were carefully restricted, and the personal services at first exacted were ultimately commuted for a fixed tribute. Living together in communities which resembled so many small republics, governed by their own laws and chiefs, guided and protected by the priests, exempt from military service and all the burdens imposed by the state on the rest of the population, the Indians constituted, down to the period of Independence, a separate and privileged class, despised, it is true, but not oppressed, by the superior race.—K.]

“ that it was well that those who at the price of their blood had won the capital should not be allowed a footing in it,” withdrew to his favorite villa of Co-johuacan, a few miles distant, to await there the result of these strange proceedings.¹¹

The suspicions of the court of Madrid, meanwhile, fanned by the breath of calumny, had reached the most preposterous height. One might have supposed that it fancied the general was organizing a revolt throughout the colonies and meditated nothing less than an invasion of the mother country. Intelligence having been received that a vessel might speedily be expected from New Spain, orders were sent to the different ports of the kingdom, and even to Portugal, to sequester the cargo, under the expectation that it contained remittances to the general’s family which belonged to the crown; while his letters, affording the most luminous account of all his proceedings and discoveries, were forbidden to be printed. Fortunately, however, three letters, constituting the most important part of the Conqueror’s correspondence, had been given to the public, some years previous, by the indefatigable press of Seville.

The court, moreover, made aware of the incompetency of the treasurer, Estrada, to the present delicate conjuncture, now intrusted the whole affair of the inquiry to a commission dignified with the title of the Royal Audience of New Spain. This body was clothed with full powers to examine into the charges against Cortés, with instructions

¹¹ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 194.—*Carta de Cortés al Emperador*, MS., Set. 11, 1526.

to send him back, as a preliminary measure, to Castile,—peacefully if they could, but forcibly if necessary. Still afraid that its belligerent vassal might defy the authority of this tribunal, the government resorted to artifice to effect his return. The president of the Indian Council was commanded to write to him, urging his presence in Spain to vindicate himself from the charges of his enemies, and offering his personal co-operation in his defence. The emperor further wrote a letter to the Audience, containing his commands for Cortés to return, as the government wished to consult him on matters relating to the Indies, and to bestow on him a recompense suited to his high deserts. This letter was intended to be shown to Cortés.¹²

But it was superfluous to put in motion all this complicated machinery to effect a measure on which Cortés was himself resolved. Proudly conscious of his own unswerving loyalty, and of the benefits he had rendered to his country, he was deeply sensible to this unworthy requital of them, especially on the very theatre of his achievements. He determined to abide no longer where he was exposed to such indignities, but to proceed at once to Spain, present himself before his sovereign, boldly assert his innocence, and claim redress for his wrongs and a just reward for his services. In the close of his letter to the emperor, detailing the painful expedition to Honduras, after enlarging on the magnificent schemes he had entertained of discovery in the South Sea, and vindicating himself from the charge of a too lavish expenditure, he

¹² Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 4, lib. 2, cap. 1; and lib. 3, cap. 8.

concludes with the lofty yet touching declaration "that he trusts his Majesty will in time acknowledge his deserts; but, if that unhappily shall not be, the world at least will be assured of his loyalty, and he himself shall have the conviction of having done his duty; and no better inheritance than this shall he ask for his children."¹³

No sooner was the intention of Cortés made known, than it excited a general sensation through the country. Even Estrada relented; he felt that he had gone too far, and that it was not his policy to drive his noble enemy to take refuge in his own land. Negotiations were opened, and an attempt at a reconciliation was made, through the bishop of Tlascala. Cortés received these overtures in a courteous spirit, but his resolution was unshaken. Having made the necessary arrangements, therefore, in Mexico, he left the Valley, and proceeded at once to the coast. Had he entertained the criminal ambition imputed to him by his enemies, he might have been sorely tempted by the repeated offers of support which were made to him, whether in good or in bad faith, on the journey, if he would but reassume the government and assert his independence of Castile. But these disloyal advances he rejected with the scorn they merited.¹⁴

¹³ "Todas estas entradas están ahora para partir casi á una, plega á Dios de los guiar como él se sirva, que yo aunque V. M. mas me mande desfavorecer no tengo de dejar de servir, que no es posible que por tiempo V. M. no conosca mis servicios, y ya que esto no sea, yo me satisfago con hacer lo que debo, y con saber que á todo el mundo tengo satisfecho, y les son notorios mis servicios, y lealdad, con que los hago, y no quiero otro mayorazgo sino este." Carta Quinta, MS.

¹⁴ Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 194.—Carta de Ocaña, MS., Agosto 31, 1526.

On his arrival at Villa Rica he received the painful tidings of the death of his father, Don Martin Cortés, whom he had hoped so soon to embrace after his long and eventful absence. Having celebrated his obsequies with every mark of filial respect, he made preparations for his speedy departure. Two of the best vessels in the port were got ready and provided with everything requisite for a long voyage. He was attended by his friend the faithful Sandoval, by Tápia, and some other cavaliers most attached to his person. He also took with him several Aztec and Tlascalan chiefs, and among them a son of Montezuma, and another of Maxixca, the friendly old Tlascalan lord, both of whom were desirous to accompany the general to Castile.* He carried home a large collection of plants and minerals, as specimens of the natural resources of the country; several wild animals, and birds of gaudy plumage; various fabrics of delicate workmanship, especially the gorgeous feather-work; and a number of jugglers, dancers, and buffoons, who greatly astonished the Europeans by the marvellous facility of their performances, and were thought a suitable present for his Holiness the Pope.¹⁵ Lastly, Cortés displayed his magnificence in a rich treasure of jewels, among which

* The Pope, who was of the joyous Medici family, Clement VII., and the cardinals, were greatly delighted with the feats of the Indian jugglers, according to Diaz; and his Holiness, who, it may be added, received at the same time from Cortés a substantial dona-

* [In order to increase the number of his retinue, and thereby to impress the people of Spain with a sense of his importance, Cortés offered free passage and maintenance to all who wished to accompany him to the court of his sovereign.—M.]

were emeralds of extraordinary size and lustre, gold to the amount of two hundred thousand *pesos de oro*, and fifteen hundred marks of silver. "In fine," says Herrera, "he came in all the state of a great lord."¹⁶

After a brief and prosperous voyage, Cortés came in sight once more of his native shores, and, crossing the bar of Saltes, entered the little port of Palos in May, 1528,*—the same spot where Columbus had landed five-and-thirty years before, on his return from the discovery of the Western World. Cortés was not greeted with the enthusiasm and public rejoicings which welcomed the great navigator; and, indeed, the inhabitants were not prepared for his arrival. From Palos he soon proceeded to the convent of La Rabida, the same place, also, within the hospitable walls of which Columbus had found a shelter. An interesting circumstance is mentioned by historians, connected with his short stay at Palos. Francisco Pizarro, the Conqueror of Peru, had arrived there, having come to Spain to solicit aid for his great enterprise.¹⁷ He was then in the commencement of his brilliant career, as Cortés might be said to be at the

tive of gold and jewels, publicly testified, by prayers and solemn processions, his great sense of the services rendered to Christianity by the Conquerors of Mexico, and generously requited them by bulls granting plenary absolution from their sins. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 195.

¹⁶ "Y en fin venia como gran Señor." Hist. gen., dec. 4, lib. 3, cap. 8.

¹⁷ Herrera, Hist. general, dec. 4, lib. 4, cap. 1.—Cavo, Los tres Siglos de México, tom. i. p. 78.

*[Sandoval (Carlos V. i. 895) and Gomara (Hist. Mexico, p. 283) make Cortés to have landed in the latter part of the year 1528.—M.]

close of his. He was an old acquaintance, and a kinsman, as is affirmed, of the general, whose mother was a Pizarro.¹⁸ The meeting of these two extraordinary men, the Conquerors of the North and of the South in the New World, as they set foot, after their eventful absence, on the shores of their native land, and that, too, on the spot consecrated by the presence of Columbus, has something in it striking to the imagination. It has accordingly attracted the attention of one of the most illustrious of living poets, who, in a brief but beautiful sketch, has depicted the scene in the genuine coloring of the age.¹⁹

While reposing from the fatigues of his voyage, at La Rabida, an event occurred which afflicted Cortés deeply and which threw a dark cloud over his return. This was the death of Gonzalo de Sandoval, his trusty friend, and so long the companion of his fortunes. He was taken ill in a wretched inn at Palos, soon after landing; * and his malady gained ground so rapidly that it was evident his constitution, impaired, probably, by the extraordinary fatigues he had of late years undergone, would be unable to resist it. Cortés was instantly sent for, and arrived in time to administer the last consolations of friendship to the dying cavalier.

¹⁸ Pizarro y Orellana, *Varones ilustres*, p. 121.

¹⁹ See the conclusion of Rogers's *Voyage of Columbus*.

* [While Sandoval was lying helpless upon his bed his host entered the room and, supposing him to be asleep, proceeded to examine his luggage. As the sick man feigned sleep in order to escape murder, the other broke open the treasure-box, took therefrom the bars of gold, and fled with his booty to Portugal. No trace of him could afterward be found.—M.]

Sandoval met his approaching end with composure, and, having given the attention which the short interval allowed to the settlement of both his temporal and spiritual concerns, he breathed his last in the arms of his commander.

Sandoval died at the premature age of thirty-one.²⁰ He was in many respects the most eminent of the great captains formed under the eye of Cortés. He was of good family, and a native of Medellin, also the birthplace of the general, for whom he had the warmest personal regard. Cortés soon discerned his uncommon qualities, and proved it by uniformly selecting the young officer for the most difficult commissions. His conduct on these occasions fully justified the preference. He was a decided favorite with the soldiers; for, though strict in enforcing discipline, he was careful of their comforts and little mindful of his own. He had nothing of the avarice so common in the Castilian cavalier, and seemed to have no other ambition than that of faithfully discharging the duties of his profession. He was a plain man, affecting neither the showy manners nor the bravery in costume which distinguished Alvarado, the Aztec *Tonatiuh*. The expression of his countenance was open and manly; his chestnut hair curled close to his head; his frame was strong and sinewy. He had a lisp in his utterance, which made his voice somewhat indistinct. Indeed, he was no speaker; but, if slow of speech, he was prompt and energetic in action. He had precisely the qualities which fitted him for

²⁰ Bernal Diaz says that Sandoval was twenty-two years old when he first came to New Spain, in 1519.—Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 205.

the perilous enterprise in which he had embarked. He had accomplished his task; and, after having escaped death, which lay waiting for him in every step of his path, had come home, as it would seem, to his native land, only to meet it there.

His obsequies were performed with all solemnity by the Franciscan friars of La Rabida, and his remains were followed to their final resting-place by the comrades who had so often stood by his side in battle. They were laid in the cemetery of the convent, which, shrouded in its forest of pines, stood, and may yet stand, on the bold eminence that overlooks the waste of waters so lately traversed by the adventurous soldier.²¹

It was not long after this melancholy event that Cortés and his suite began their journey into the interior. The general stayed a few days at the castle of the duke of Medina Sidonia, the most powerful of the Andalusian lords, who hospitably entertained him, and, at his departure, presented him with several noble Arabian horses. Cortés first directed his steps towards Guadalupe, where he passed nine days, offering up prayers and causing masses to be performed at Our Lady's shrine for the soul of his departed friend.

Before his departure from La Rabida, he had written to the court, informing it of his arrival in the country. Great was the sensation caused there by the intelligence; the greater, that the late reports of his treasonable practices had made it wholly unexpected. His arrival produced an immediate change of feeling. All cause of jealousy

²¹ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 195.

was now removed; and, as the clouds which had so long settled over the royal mind were dispelled, the emperor seemed only anxious to show his sense of the distinguished services of his so dreaded vassal. Orders were sent to different places on the route to provide him with suitable accommodations, and preparations were made to give him a brilliant reception in the capital.

Meanwhile, Cortés had formed the acquaintance at Guadalupe of several persons of distinction, and among them of the family of the *comendador* of Leon, a nobleman of the highest consideration at court. The general's conversation, enriched with the stores of a life of adventure, and his manners, in which the authority of habitual command was tempered by the frank and careless freedom of the soldier, made a most favorable impression on his new friends; and their letters to the court, where he was yet unknown, heightened the interest already felt in this remarkable man. The tidings of his arrival had by this time spread far and wide throughout the country; and, as he resumed his journey, the roads presented a spectacle such as had not been seen since the return of Columbus. Cortés did not usually affect an ostentation of dress, though he loved to display the pomp of a great lord in the number and magnificence of his retainers. His train was now swelled by the Indian chieftains, who by the splendors of their barbaric finery gave additional brilliancy, as well as novelty, to the pageant. But his own person was the object of general curiosity. The houses and the streets of the great towns and villages were thronged with

spectators, eager to look on the hero who with his single arm, as it were, had won an empire for Castile, and who, to borrow the language of an old historian, "came in the pomp and glory, not so much of a great vassal, as of an independent monarch."²²

As he approached Toledo, then the rival of Madrid, the press of the multitude increased till he was met by the duke de Bejar, the count de Aguilar, and others of his steady friends, who, at the head of a large body of the principal nobility and cavaliers of the city, came out to receive him, and attended him to the quarters prepared for his residence. It was a proud moment for Cortés; and distrusting, as he well might, his reception by his countrymen, it afforded him a greater satisfaction than the brilliant entrance which, a few years previous, he had made into the capital of Mexico.

The following day he was admitted to an audience by the emperor, and Cortés, gracefully kneeling to kiss the hand of his sovereign, presented to him a memorial which succinctly recounted his services and the requital he had received for them. The emperor graciously raised him, and put many questions to him respecting the countries he had conquered. Charles was pleased with the general's answers, and his intelligent mind took great satisfaction in inspecting the curious specimens of Indian ingenuity which his vassal had brought with him from New Spain. In subsequent conversa-

²² "Vino de las Indias despues de la conquista de Mexico, con tanto acompañamiento y magestad, que mas parecia de Príncipe, ó señor poderosissimo, que de Capitan y vasallo de algun Rey ó Emperador." Lanuza, *Historias eclesiásticas y seculares de Aragón* (Zaragoza, 1622), lib. 3, cap. 14.

tions the emperor repeatedly consulted Cortés on the best mode of administering the government of the colonies, and by his advice introduced some important regulations, especially for ameliorating the condition of the natives and for encouraging domestic industry.

The monarch took frequent opportunity to show the confidence which he now reposed in Cortés. On all public occasions he appeared with him by his side; and once, when the general lay ill of a fever, Charles paid him a visit in person, and remained some time in the apartment of the invalid. This was an extraordinary mark of condescension in the haughty court of Castile; and it is dwelt upon with becoming emphasis by the historians of the time, who seem to regard it as an ample compensation for all the sufferings and services of Cortés.²³

The latter had now fairly triumphed over opposition. The courtiers, with that ready instinct which belongs to the tribe, imitated the example of their master; and even envy was silent, amidst the general homage that was paid to the man who had so lately been a mark for the most envenomed calumny. Cortés, without a title, without a name but what he had created for himself, was at once, as it were, raised to a level with the proudest nobles in the land.

He was so still more effectually by the substantial honors which were accorded to him by his sovereign in the course of the following year. By an instrument dated July 6th, 1529, the emperor

²³ Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 183.—Herrera, *Hist. general*, dec. 4, lib. 4, cap. 1.—Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 195.

raised him to the dignity of the Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca;²⁴ and the title of "marquis," when used without the name of the individual, has been always appropriated in the colonies, in an especial manner, to Cortés, as the title of "admiral" was to Columbus.²⁵

Two other instruments, dated in the same month of July, assigned to Cortés a vast tract of land in the rich province of Oaxaca, together with large estates in the city of Mexico, and other places in the Valley.²⁶ The princely domain thus granted comprehended more than twenty large towns and villages, and twenty-three thousand vassals. The language in which the gift was made greatly enhanced its value. The preamble of the instrument, after enlarging on the "good services rendered by Cortés in the Conquest, and the great benefits resulting therefrom, both in respect to the increase of the Castilian empire and the advancement of the Holy Catholic Faith," acknowledges the "sufferings he had undergone in accomplishing this glorious work, and the fidelity and obedience with which, as a good and trusty vassal, he had ever served the crown."²⁷ It declares, in conclusion,

²⁴ Título de Marques, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

²⁵ Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 30, note.—According to Lanuza, he was offered by the emperor the Order of St. Jago, but declined it, because no *encomienda* was attached to it. (Hist. de Aragon, tom. i, lib. 3, cap. 14.) But Caro de Torres, in his History of the Military Orders of Castile, enumerates Cortés among the members of the Compostellan fraternity. Hist. de las Órdenes militares (Madrid, 1629), fol. 103, et seq.

²⁶ Merced de Tierras inmediatas á Mexico, MS., Barcelona, 23 de Julio, 1529.—Merced de los Vasallos, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

²⁷ "É nos habemos recibido y tenemos de vos por bien servido en ello, y acatando los grandes provechos que de vuestros servicios han

MS. M. 1. 1. fol. 100, recto. (See also fol. 100, verso.)

Ramón de

The other signature (Fernando Gómez) together with the signature of Hernán Cortés
forms an emblematic allusion to the name and the *Córdoba* signature
of the Alonso de Ercilla (see verso). It is not easy to connect
with it another than the name of the conqueror of Mexico.

that it grants this recompense of his deserts because it is "the duty of princes to honor and reward those who serve them well and loyally, in order that the memory of their great deeds should be perpetuated, and others be incited by their example to the performance of the like illustrious exploits." The unequivocal testimony thus borne by his sovereign to his unwavering loyalty was most gratifying to Cortés,—how gratifying, every generous soul who has been the subject of suspicion undeserved will readily estimate. The language of the general in after-time shows how deeply he was touched by it.²⁸

Yet there was one degree in the scale, above which the royal gratitude would not rise. Neither the solicitations of Cortés, nor those of the duke de Bejar and his other powerful friends, could prevail on the emperor to reinstate him in the government of Mexico. The country, reduced to tranquillity, had no longer need of his commanding genius to control it; and Charles did not care to place again his formidable vassal in a situation which might revive the dormant spark of jealousy and distrust. It was the policy of the crown to employ one class redundado, ansí para el servicio de Nuestro Señor y aumento de su santa fé católica, y en las dichas tierras que estaban sin conocimiento ni fé se han plantado, como el acrecentamiento que dello ha redundado á nuestra corona real destos reynos, y los trabajos que en ello habeis pasado, y la fidelidad y obediencia con que siempre nos habeis servido como bueno é fiel servidor y vasallo nuestro, de que somos ciertos y confiados." Merced de los Vasallos, MS.

²⁸ "The benignant reception which I experienced, on my return, from your Majesty," says Cortés, "your kind expressions and generous treatment, make me not only forget all my toils and sufferings, but even cause me regret that I have not been called to endure more in your service." (Carta de Cortés al Lic. Nuñez, MS., 1535.) This memorial, addressed to his agent in Castile, was designed for the emperor.

of its subjects to effect its conquests, and another class to rule over them. For the latter it selected men in whom the fire of ambition was tempered by a cooler judgment naturally, or by the sober influence of age. Even Columbus, notwithstanding the terms of his original "capitulation" with the crown, had not been permitted to preside over the colonies; and still less likely would it be to concede this power to one possessed of the aspiring temper of Cortés.

But, although the emperor refused to commit the civil government of the colony into his hands, he reinstated him in military command. By a royal ordinance, dated also in July, 1529, the marquis of the Valley was named Captain-General of New Spain and of the coasts of the South Sea. He was empowered to make discoveries in the Southern Ocean, with the right to rule over such lands as he should colonize,²⁹ and by a subsequent grant he was to become proprietor of one-twelfth of all his discoveries.³⁰ The government had no design to relinquish the services of so able a commander. But it warily endeavored to withdraw him from the scene of his former triumphs, and to throw open a new career of ambition, that might stimulate him still further to enlarge the dominions of the crown.

Thus gilded by the sunshine of royal favor, "rivaling," to borrow the homely comparison of an old chronicler, "Alexander in the fame of his ex-

²⁹ Título de Capitan General de la Nueva-España y Costa del Sur, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

³⁰ Asiento y Capitulacion que hizo con el Emperador Don H. Cortés, MS., Madrid, 27 de Oct., 1529.

ploits, and Crassus in that of his riches,"³¹ with brilliant manners, and a person which, although it showed the effects of hard service, had not yet lost all the attractions of youth, Cortés might now be regarded as offering an enviable alliance for the best houses in Castile. It was not long before he paid his addresses, which were favorably received, to a member of that noble house which had so steadily supported him in the dark hour of his fortunes. The lady's name was Doña Juana de Zuñiga, daughter of the second count de Aguilar, and niece of the duke de Bejar.³² She was much younger than himself, beautiful, and, as events showed, not without spirit. One of his presents to his youthful bride excited the admiration and envy of the fairer part of the court. This was five emeralds, of wonderful size and brilliancy. These jewels had been cut by the Aztecs into the shapes of flowers, fishes, and into other fanciful forms, with an exquisite style of workmanship which enhanced their original value.³³ They were, not im-

³¹ "Que, segun se dezia, excedia en las hazañas á Alejandro Magno, y en las riquezas á Crasso." (Lanuza, *Hist. de Aragon*, lib. 3, cap. 14.) The rents of the marquis of the Valley, according to L. Maríneo Siculo, who lived at the court at this time, were about 60,000 ducats a year. *Cosas memorables de España* (Alcalá de Henares, 1539), fol. 24.

³² Doña Juana was of the house of Arellano, and of the royal lineage of Navarre. Her father was not a very wealthy noble. L. Maríneo Siculo, *Cosas memorables*, fol. 24, 25.

³³ One of these precious stones was as valuable as Shylock's turquoise. Some Genoese merchants in Seville offered Cortés, according to Gomara, 40,000 ducats for it. The same author gives a more particular account of the jewels, which may interest some readers. It shows the ingenuity of the artist, who, without steel, could so nicely cut so hard a material. One emerald was in the form of a rose; the second, in that of a horn; a third, like a fish, with eyes of

probably, part of the treasure of the unfortunate Montezuma, and, being easily portable, may have escaped the general wreck of the *noche triste*. The queen of Charles the Fifth, it is said,—it may be the idle gossip of a court,—had intimated a willingness to become proprietor of some of these magnificent baubles; and the preference which Cortés gave to his fair bride caused some feelings of estrangement in the royal bosom, which had an unfavorable influence on the future fortunes of the marquis.

Late in the summer of 1529, Charles the Fifth left his Spanish dominions for Italy. Cortés accompanied him on his way, probably to the place of embarkation; and in the capital of Aragon we find him, according to the national historian, exciting the same general interest and admiration among the people as he had done in Castile. On his return, there seemed no occasion for him to protract his stay longer in the country. He was weary of the life of idle luxury which he had been leading for the last year, and which was so foreign to his active habits and the stirring scenes to which he had been accustomed. He determined, therefore, to return to Mexico, where his extensive property required his presence, and where a new field was now opened to him for honorable enterprise.

gold; the fourth was like a little bell, with a fine pearl for the tongue, and on the rim was this inscription, in Spanish: *Blessed is he who created thee.* The fifth, which was the most valuable, was a small cup with a foot of gold, and with four little chains, of the same metal, attached to a large pearl as a button. The edge of the cup was of gold, on which was engraven this Latin sentence: *Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major.* Gomara, Crónica, cap. 184.

CHAPTER V

CORTÉS REVISITS MEXICO—RETIRES TO HIS ESTATES
—HIS VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY—FINAL RETURN
TO CASTILE—COLD RECEPTION—DEATH OF COR-
TÉS—HIS CHARACTER

1530—1547

EARLY in the spring of 1530, Cortés embarked for New Spain. He was accompanied by the marchioness, his wife, together with his aged mother, who had the good fortune to live to see her son's elevation, and by a magnificent retinue of pages and attendants, such as belonged to the household of a powerful noble. How different from the forlorn condition in which, twenty-six years before, he had been cast loose, as a wild adventurer, to seek his bread upon the waters!

The first point of his destination was Hispaniola, where he was to remain until he received tidings of the organization of the new government that was to take charge of Mexico.¹ In the preceding chapter it was stated that the administration of the country had been intrusted to a body called the Royal Audience; one of whose first duties it was to investigate the charges brought against Cortés. Nuñez de Guzman, his avowed enemy, was placed

¹ Carta de Cortés al Emperador, MS., Tezcoco, 10 de Oct., 1530.

at the head of this board; and the investigation was conducted with all the rancor of personal hostility. A remarkable document still exists, called the *Pesquisa Secreta*, or "Secret Inquiry," which contains a record of the proceedings against Cortés. It was prepared by the secretary of the Audience, and signed by the several members. The document is very long, embracing nearly a hundred folio pages. The name and the testimony of every witness are given, and the whole forms a mass of loathsome details, such as might better suit a prosecution in a petty municipal court than that of a great officer of the crown.

The charges are eight in number; involving, among other crimes, that of a deliberate design to cast off his allegiance to the crown; that of the murder of two of the commissioners who had been sent out to supersede him; of the murder of his own wife, Catalina Xuarez;² of extortion, and of

² Doña Catalina's death happened so opportunely for the rising fortunes of Cortés, that this charge of murder by her husband has found more credit with the vulgar than the other accusations brought against him. Cortés, from whatever reason, perhaps from the conviction that the charge was too monstrous to obtain credit, never condescended to vindicate his innocence. But, in addition to the arguments mentioned in the text for discrediting the accusations generally, we should consider that this particular charge attracted so little attention in Castile, where he had abundance of enemies, that he found no difficulty, on his return there seven years afterwards, in forming an alliance with one of the noblest houses in the kingdom; that no writer of that day (except Bernal Diaz, who treats it as a base calumny), not even Las Casas, the stern accuser of the Conquerors, intimates a suspicion of his guilt; and that, lastly, no allusion whatever is made to it in the suit instituted, some years after her death, by the relatives of Doña Catalina, for the recovery of property from Cortés pretended to have been derived through her marriage with him,—a suit conducted with acrimony and protracted for several years. I have not seen the documents





licentious practices,—of offences, in short, which, from their private nature, would seem to have little to do with his conduct as a public man. The testimony is vague and often contradictory; the witnesses are for the most part obscure individuals, and the few persons of consideration among them appear to have been taken from the ranks of his decided enemies. When it is considered that the inquiry was conducted in the absence of Cortés, before a court the members of which were personally unfriendly to him, and that he was furnished with no specification of the charges, and had no opportunity, consequently, of disproving them, it is impossible, at this distance of time, to attach any importance to this paper as a legal document. When it is added that no action was taken on it by the government to whom it was sent, we may be disposed to regard it simply as a monument of the malice of his enemies. It has been drawn by the curious antiquary from the obscurity to which it had been so long consigned in the Indian archives at Seville; but it can be of no further use to the historian than to show that a great name in the sixteenth century exposed its possessor to calumnies as malignant as it has at any time since.³

connected with this suit, which are still preserved in the archives of the house of Cortés, but the fact has been communicated to me by a distinguished Mexican who has carefully examined them, and I cannot but regard it as of itself conclusive that the family at least of Doña Catalina did not attach credit to the accusation. Yet so much credit has been given to this in Mexico, where the memory of the old Spaniards is not held in especial favor at the present day, that it has formed the subject of an elaborate discussion in the public periodicals of that city.

³ This remarkable paper, forming part of the valuable collection of Don Vargas Ponçé, is without date. It was doubtless prepared

The high-handed measures of the Audience, and the oppressive conduct of Guzman, especially towards the Indians, excited general indignation in the colony and led to serious apprehensions of an insurrection. It became necessary to supersede an administration so reckless and unprincipled. But Cortés was detained two months at the island, by the slow movements of the Castilian court, before tidings reached him of the appointment of a new Audience for the government of the country. The person selected to preside over it was the bishop of St. Domingo, a prelate whose acknowledged wisdom and virtue gave favorable augury for the conduct of his administration. After this, Cortés resumed his voyage, and landed at Villa Rica on the 15th of July, 1530.

After remaining for a time in the neighborhood, where he received some petty annoyances from the Audience, he proceeded to Tlascala, and publicly proclaimed his powers as Captain-General of New Spain and the South Sea. An edict issued by the empress during her husband's absence had inter-

in 1529, during the visit of Cortés to Castile. The following Title is prefixed to it:

“ Pesquisa secreta.

“ Relacion de los cargos que resultan de la pesquisa secreta contra Don Hernando Cortés, de los cuales no se le dió copia ni traslado á la parte del dicho Don Hernando, así por ser los dichos cargos de la calidad que son, como por estar la persona del dicho Don Hernando ausente como está. Los cuales yo Gregorio de Saldaña, escribano de S. M. y escribano de la dicha Residencia, saqué de la dicha pesquisa secreta por mandado de los Señores, Presidente y Oidores de la Audiencia y Chancillería Real que por mandado de S. M. en esta Nueva España reside. Los cuales dichos Señores, Presidente y Oidores, envian á S. M. para que los mande ver, y vistos mande proveer lo que á su servicio convenga.” MS.

dicted Cortés from approaching within ten leagues of the Mexican capital while the present authorities were there.⁴ The empress was afraid of a collision between the parties. Cortés, however, took up his residence on the opposite side of the lake, at Tezcoco.

No sooner was his arrival there known in the metropolis than multitudes, both of Spaniards and natives, crossed the lake to pay their respects to their old commander, to offer him their services, and to complain of their manifold grievances. It seemed as if the whole population of the capital was pouring into the neighboring city, where the marquis maintained the state of an independent potentate. The members of the Audience, indignant at the mortifying contrast which their own diminished court presented, imposed heavy penalties on such of the natives as should be found in Tezcoco, and, affecting to consider themselves in danger, made preparations for the defence of the city. But these belligerent movements were terminated by the arrival of the new Audience; though Guzman had the address to maintain his hold on a northern province, where he earned a reputation for cruelty and extortion unrivalled even in the annals of the New World.

Everything seemed now to assure a tranquil residence to Cortés. The new magistrates treated him with marked respect, and took his advice on the most important measures of government. Unhappily, this state of things did not long continue; and a misunderstanding arose between the parties, in

⁴ MS., Tordelaguna, 22 de Marzo, 1530.

respect to the enumeration of the vassals assigned by the crown to Cortés, which the marquis thought was made on principles prejudicial to his interests and repugnant to the intentions of the grant.⁵ * He was still further displeased by finding that the Audience were intrusted, by their commission, with a concurrent jurisdiction with himself in military affairs.⁶ This led occasionally to an interference, which the proud spirit of Cortés, so long accustomed to independent rule, could ill brook. After submitting to it for a time, he left the capital in disgust, no more to return there, and took up his residence in his city of Cuernavaca.

It was the place won by his own sword from the Aztecs previous to the siege of Mexico. It stood on the southern slope of the Cordilleras, and overlooked a wide expanse of country, the fairest and most flourishing portion of his own domain.⁷ He had erected a stately palace on the spot, and hence-

⁵ The principal grievance alleged was that slaves, many of them held temporarily by their masters, according to the old Aztec usage, were comprehended in the census. The complaint forms part of a catalogue of grievances embodied by Cortés in a memorial to the emperor. It is a clear and business-like paper. *Carta de Cortés á Nuñez, MS.*

⁶ *Ibid., MS.*

⁷ [“Dominando una vista muy extensa sobre el valle hacia el Sur, lo que al Norte y Oriente se termina con la magestuosa cordillera que separa el valle de Cuernavaca del de Méjico.” Alaman, *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. ii. p. 35.]

* [The commission appointed by the Audience to take the census, after laboring at their task for many weeks, were at last forced to report that it was impossible to make a correct enumeration, as not more than one-fifth of the estimated population could be found. The Indians, at the suggestion of their chiefs, who were all friendly to Cortés, evaded the count, and threw as many difficulties in the way of the enumerators as possible.—M.]

forth made this city his favorite residence.⁸ It was well situated for superintending his vast estates, and he now devoted himself to bringing them into proper cultivation. He introduced the sugar-cane from Cuba, and it grew luxuriantly in the rich soil of the neighboring lowlands. He imported large numbers of merino sheep and other cattle, which found abundant pastures in the country around Tehuantepec. His lands were thickly sprinkled with groves of mulberry-trees, which furnished nourishment for the silk-worm. He encouraged the cultivation of hemp and flax, and, by his judicious and enterprising husbandry, showed the capacity of the soil for the culture of valuable products before unknown in the land; and he turned these products to the best account, by the erection of sugar-mills, and other works for the manufacture of the raw material. He thus laid the foundation of an opulence for his family, as substantial, if not as speedy, as that derived from the mines. Yet this latter source of wealth was not

⁸ The palace has crumbled into ruins, and the spot is now only remarkable for its natural beauty and its historic associations. "It was the capital," says Madame de Calderon, "of the Tlahuica nation, and, after the Conquest, Cortés built here a splendid palace, a church, and a convent for Franciscans, believing that he had laid the foundation of a great city. . . . It is, however, a place of little importance, though so favored by nature; and the Conqueror's palace is a half-ruined barrack, though a most picturesque object, standing on a hill, behind which starts up the great white volcano." Life in Mexico, vol. ii. let. 31. [The beautiful church of San Francisco, now the parish church, was constructed by Cortés, and enriched with jewels and sacred vessels by his wife, manifesting, says Alaman, the good taste and the piety of *the marquis* and *the marchioness*,—as, in consequence of their being the first and at that time the only persons who bore the title in Mexico, they were styled and always subscribed themselves. Disertaciones históricas, tom. ii. p. 35.]

neglected by him, and he drew gold from the region of Tehuantepec, and silver from that of Zacatecas. The amount derived from these mines was not so abundant as at a later day. But the expense of working them, on the other hand, was much less in the earlier stages of the operation, when the metal lay so much nearer the surface.⁹

But this tranquil way of life did not long content his restless and adventurous spirit; and it sought a vent by availing itself of his new charter of discovery to explore the mysteries of the great Southern Ocean. In 1527, two years before his return to Spain, he had sent a little squadron to the Moluccas. The expedition was attended with some important consequences; but, as they do not relate to Cortés, an account of it will find a more suitable place in the maritime annals of Spain, where it has been given by the able hand which has done so much for the country in this department.¹⁰

Cortés was preparing to send another squadron of four vessels in the same direction, when his plans were interrupted by his visit to Spain; and his unfinished little navy, owing to the malice of the Royal Audience, who drew off the hands employed in building it, went to pieces on the stocks. Two other squadrons were now fitted out by Cortés, in the years 1532 and 1533, and sent on a voy-

⁹ These particulars respecting the agricultural economy of Cortés I have derived in part from a very able argument, prepared, in January, 1828, for the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, by Don Lucas Alaman, in defence of the territorial rights possessed at this day by the Conqueror's descendant, the duke of Monteleone.

¹⁰ Navarrete, Coleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos (Madrid, 1837), tom. v., Viages al Maluco.

age of discovery to the Northwest.¹¹ They were unfortunate, though in the latter expedition the Californian peninsula was reached, and a landing effected on its southern extremity at Santa Cruz, probably the modern port of La Paz. One of the vessels, thrown on the coast of New Galicia, was seized by Guzman, the old enemy of Cortés, who ruled over that territory, the crew were plundered, and the ship was detained as a lawful prize. Cortés, indignant at the outrage, demanded justice from the Royal Audience; and, as that body was too feeble to enforce its own decrees in his favor, he took redress into his own hands.¹²

He made a rapid but difficult march on Chiametla, the scene of Guzman's spoliation; and, as the latter did not care to face his incensed antagonist, Cortés recovered his vessel, though not the cargo. He was then joined by the little squadron which he had fitted out from his own port of Tehuantepec,—a port which in the sixteenth century promised to hold the place since occupied by that of Acapulco.¹³ The vessels were provided with everything requisite for planting a colony in the newly-discovered region, and transported four hundred Spaniards and *three hundred negro slaves*, which Cortés had assembled for that purpose. With this intention he crossed the Gulf, the

¹¹ Instruccion que dió el Marques del Valle á Juan de Avellaneda, etc., MS.

¹² Provision sobre los Descubrimientos del Sur, MS., Setiembre, 1534.

¹³ The river Huasacualco furnished great facilities for transporting across the isthmus, from Vera Cruz, materials to build vessels on the Pacific. Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. iv. p. 50.

Adriatic—to which an old writer compares it—of the Western World.

Our limits will not allow us to go into the details of this disastrous expedition, which was attended with no important results either to its projector or to science. It may suffice to say that, in the prosecution of it, Cortés and his followers were driven to the last extremity by famine; that he again crossed the Gulf, was tossed about by terrible tempests, without a pilot to guide him, was thrown upon the rocks, where his shattered vessel nearly went to pieces, and, after a succession of dangers and disasters as formidable as any which he had ever encountered on land, succeeded, by means of his indomitable energy, in bringing his crazy bark safe into the same port of Santa Cruz from which he had started.

While these occurrences were passing, the new Royal Audience, after a faithful discharge of its commission, had been superseded by the arrival of a viceroy, the first ever sent to New Spain. Cortés, though invested with similar powers, had the title only of Governor. This was the commencement of the system, afterwards pursued by the crown, of intrusting the colonial administration to some individual whose high rank and personal consideration might make him the fitting representative of majesty. The jealousy of the court did not allow the subject clothed with such ample authority to remain long enough in the same station to form dangerous schemes of ambition, but at the expiration of a few years he was usually recalled, or transferred to some other province of the vast colonial empire. The person now sent to Mexico was

Don Antonio de Mendoza, a man of moderation and practical good sense, and one of that illustrious family who in the preceding reign furnished so many distinguished ornaments to the Church, to the camp, and to letters.

The long absence of Cortés had caused the deepest anxiety in the mind of his wife, the marchioness of the Valley. She wrote to the viceroy immediately on his arrival, beseeching him to ascertain, if possible, the fate of her husband, and, if he could be found, to urge his return. The viceroy, in consequence, despatched two ships in search of Cortés, but whether they reached him before his departure from Santa Cruz is doubtful. It is certain that he returned safe, after his long absence, to Acapulco, and was soon followed by the survivors of his wretched colony.

Undismayed by these repeated reverses, Cortés, still bent on some discovery worthy of his reputation, fitted out three more vessels, and placed them under the command of an officer named Ulloa. This expedition, which took its departure in July, 1539, was attended with more important results. Ulloa penetrated to the head of the Gulf, then, returning and winding round the coast of the peninsula, doubled its southern point, and ascended as high as the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth degree of north latitude on its western borders. After this, sending home one of the squadron, the bold navigator held on his course to the north, but was never more heard of.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Instruccion del Marques del Valle*, MS.—The most particular and authentic account of Ulloa's cruise will be found in Ramusio. (Tom. iii. pp. 340-354.) It is by one of the officers of the squad-

Thus ended the maritime enterprises of Cortés, sufficiently disastrous in a pecuniary view, since they cost him three hundred thousand *castellanos* of gold, without the return of a ducat.¹⁵ He was even obliged to borrow money, and to pawn his wife's jewels, to procure funds for the last enterprise;¹⁶ thus incurring a debt which, increased by the great charges of his princely establishment, hung about him during the remainder of his life. But, though disastrous in an economical view, his generous efforts added important contributions to science. In the course of these expeditions, and those undertaken by Cortés previous to his visit to Spain, the Pacific had been coasted from the Bay of Panamá to the Rio Colorado. The great peninsula of California had been circumnavigated as far as to the isle of Cedros, or Cerros, into which the

ron. My limits will not allow me to give the details of the voyages made by Cortés, which, although not without interest, were attended with no permanent consequences.* A good summary of his expeditions in the Gulf has been given by Navarrete in the Introduction to his *Relacion del Viage hecho por las Goletas Sutil y Mexicana* (Madrid, 1802), pp. vi.-xxvi.; and the English reader will find a brief account of them in Greenhow's valuable *Memoir on the Northwest Coast of North America* (Washington, 1840), pp. 22-27.

¹⁵ Memorial al Rey del Marques del Valle, MS., 25 de Junio, 1540.

¹⁶ Provision sobre los Descubrimientos del Sur, MS.

* [The restless and determined spirit with which Cortés pursued his mainly ineffectual projects of discovery is exemplified by a letter to the Councel of the Indies, September 20, 1538, begging that body to assist his agents in procuring pilots for him. He has at present, he says, nine vessels, very good and well equipped, and is only waiting for pilots, having tried in vain to obtain some from Panamá and Leon. Though he has not yet secured the fruits he had expected from his expeditions, he trusts in God that they will be henceforth attended with better fortune. Col. de Doc. inéd. relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Colonizacion de las Posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía, tom. iii.—K.]

name has since been corrupted. This vast tract, which had been supposed to be an archipelago of islands, was now discovered to be a part of the continent; and its general outline, as appears from the maps of the time, was nearly as well understood as at the present day.¹⁷ Lastly, the navigator had explored the recesses of the Californian Gulf, or *Sea of Cortés*, as, in honor of the great discoverer, it is with more propriety named by the Spaniards; and he had ascertained that, instead of the outlet before supposed to exist towards the north, this unknown ocean was locked up within the arms of the mighty continent. These were results that might have made the glory and satisfied the ambition of a common man; but they are lost in the brilliant renown of the former achievements of Cortés.

Notwithstanding the embarrassments of the marquis of the Valley, he still made new efforts to enlarge the limits of discovery, and prepared to fit out another squadron of five vessels, which he proposed to place under the command of a natural son, Don Luis. But the viceroy Mendoza, whose imagination had been inflamed by the reports of an itinerant monk respecting an *El Dorado* in the north, claimed the right of discovery in that direction. Cortés protested against this, as an unwarrantable interference with his own powers. Other subjects of collision arose between them; till the marquis, disgusted with this perpetual check on his authority and his enterprises, applied for re-

¹⁷ See the map prepared by the pilot Domingo del Castillo, in 1541, ap. Lorenzana, p. 328.

dress to Castile.¹⁸ He finally determined to go there to support his claims in person, and to obtain, if possible, remuneration for the heavy charges he had incurred by his maritime expeditions, as well as for the spoliation of his property by the Royal Audience during his absence from the country; and, lastly, to procure an assignment of his vassals on principles more conformable to the original intentions of the grant. With these objects in view he bade adieu to his family, and, taking with him his eldest son and heir, Don Martin, then only eight years of age, he embarked at Mexico in 1540, and, after a favorable voyage, again set foot on the shores of his native land.

The emperor was absent from the country. But Cortés was honorably received in the capital, where ample accommodations were provided for him and his retinue. When he attended the Royal Council of the Indies to urge his suit, he was distinguished by uncommon marks of respect. The president went to the door of the hall to receive him, and a seat was provided for him among the members of the Council.¹⁹ But all evaporated in this barren show of courtesy. Justice, proverbially slow in Spain, did not mend her gait for Cortés; and at the expiration of a year he found himself no nearer the attainment of his object than on the first week after his arrival in the capital.

In the following year, 1541, we find the marquis

¹⁸ In the collection of Vargas Ponce is a petition of Cortés, setting forth his grievances, and demanding an investigation of the viceroy's conduct. It is without date. *Peticion contra Don Antonio de Mendoza Virrey, pidiendo residencia contra él*, MS.

¹⁹ Bernal Diaz, *Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 200.

of the Valley embarked as a volunteer in the memorable expedition against Algiers. Charles the Fifth, on his return to his dominions, laid siege to that stronghold of the Mediterranean corsairs. Cortés accompanied the forces destined to meet the emperor, and embarked on board the vessel of the Admiral of Castile. But a furious tempest scattered the navy, and the admiral's ship was driven a wreck upon the coast. Cortés and his son escaped by swimming, but the former, in the confusion of the scene, lost the inestimable set of jewels noticed in the preceding chapter; "a loss," says an old writer, "that made the expedition fall more heavily on the marquis of the Valley than on any other man in the kingdom, except the emperor."²⁰

It is not necessary to recount the particulars of this disastrous siege, in which Moslem valor, aided by the elements, set at defiance the combined forces of the Christians. A council of war was called, and it was decided to abandon the enterprise and return to Castile. This determination was indignantly received by Cortés, who offered, with the support of the army, to reduce the place himself; and he only expressed the regret that he had not a handful of those gallant veterans by his side who had served him in the Conquest of Mexico. But his offers were derided, as those of a romantic enthusiast. He had not been invited to take part in the discussions of the council of war. It was a marked indignity; but the courtiers, weary of the service, were too much bent on an immediate return to Spain, to hazard the opposition of a man who, when

²⁰ Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 237.

he had once planted his foot, was never known to raise it again till he had accomplished his object.²¹

On arriving in Castile, Cortés lost no time in laying his suit before the emperor. His applications were received by the monarch with civility,—a cold civility, which carried no conviction of its sincerity. His position was materially changed since his former visit to the country. More than ten years had elapsed, and he was now too well advanced in years to give promise of serviceable enterprise in future. Indeed, his undertakings of late had been singularly unfortunate. Even his former successes suffered the disparagement natural to a man of declining fortunes. They were already eclipsed by the magnificent achievements in Peru, which had poured a golden tide into the country, that formed a striking contrast to the streams of wealth that as yet had flowed in but scantily from the silver mines of Mexico. Cortés had to learn that the gratitude of a court has reference to the future much more than to the past. He stood in the position of an importunate suitor whose claims, however just, are too large to be readily allowed. He found, like Columbus, that it was possible to deserve too greatly.²²

In the month of February, 1544, he addressed a

²¹ Sandoval, *Hist. de Carlos V.*, lib. 12, cap. 25.—Ferreras (trad. d'Hermilly), *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. ix. p. 231.

²² Voltaire tells us that, one day, Cortés, unable to obtain an audience of the emperor, pushed through the press surrounding the royal carriage, and mounted the steps; and, when Charles inquired "who that man was," he replied, "One who has given you more kingdoms than you had towns before." (*Essai sur les Mœurs*, chap. 147.) For this most improbable anecdote I have found no authority whatever. It served, however, very well to point a moral,—the main thing with the philosopher of Ferney.

letter to the emperor,—it was the last he ever wrote him,—soliciting his attention to his suit. He begins by proudly alluding to his past services to the crown. “He had hoped that the toils of youth would have secured him repose in his old age. For forty years he had passed his life with little sleep, bad food, and with his arms constantly by his side. He had freely exposed his person to peril, and spent his substance in exploring distant and unknown regions, that he might spread abroad the name of his sovereign and bring under his sceptre many great and powerful nations. All this he had done, not only without assistance from home, but in the face of obstacles thrown in his way by rivals and by enemies who thirsted like leeches for his blood. He was now old, infirm, and embarrassed with debt. Better had it been for him not to have known the liberal intentions of the emperor, as intimated by his grants; since he should then have devoted himself to the care of his estates, and not have been compelled, as he now was, to contend with the officers of the crown, against whom it was more difficult to defend himself than to win the land from the enemy.” He concludes with beseeching his sovereign to “order the Council of the Indies, with the other tribunals which had cognizance of his suits, to come to a decision; since he was too old to wander about like a vagrant, but ought rather, during the brief remainder of his life, to stay at home and settle his account with Heaven, occupied with the concerns of his soul, rather than with his substance.”²³

²³ The Letter, dated February 3, 1544, Valladolid, may be found entire, in the original, in Appendix, No. 15.

This appeal to his sovereign, which has something in it touching from a man of the haughty spirit of Cortés, had not the effect to quicken the determination of his suit. He still lingered at the court from week to week, and from month to month, beguiled by the deceitful hopes of the litigant, tasting all that bitterness of the soul which arises from hope deferred. After three years more, passed in this unprofitable and humiliating occupation, he resolved to leave his ungrateful country and return to Mexico.

He had proceeded as far as Seville, accompanied by his son, when he fell ill of an indigestion, caused, probably, by irritation and trouble of mind. This terminated in dysentery, and his strength sank so rapidly under the disease that it was apparent his mortal career was drawing towards its close. He prepared for it by making the necessary arrangements for the settlement of his affairs. He had made his will some time before; and he now executed it. It is a very long document, and in some respects a remarkable one.

The bulk of his property was entailed to his son, Don Martin, then fifteen years of age. In the testament he fixes his majority at twenty-five; but at twenty his guardians were to allow him his full income, to maintain the state becoming his rank. In a paper accompanying the will, Cortés specified the names of the agents to whom he had committed the management of his vast estates scattered over many different provinces; and he requests his executors to confirm the nomination, as these agents have been selected by him from a knowledge of

their peculiar qualifications. Nothing can better show the thorough supervision which, in the midst of pressing public concerns, he had given to the details of his widely-extended property.

He makes a liberal provision for his other children, and a generous allowance to several old domestics and retainers in his household. By another clause he gives away considerable sums in charity, and he applies the revenues of his estates in the city of Mexico to establish and permanently endow three public institutions,—a hospital in the capital, which was to be dedicated to Our Lady of the Conception, a college in Cojohuacan for the education of missionaries to preach the gospel among the natives, and a convent, in the same place, for nuns. To the chapel of this convent, situated in his favorite town, he orders that his own body shall be transported for burial, in whatever quarter of the world he may happen to die.

After declaring that he has taken all possible care to ascertain the amount of the tributes formerly paid by his Indian vassals to their native sovereigns, he enjoins on his heir that, in case those which they have hitherto paid shall be found to exceed the right valuation, he shall restore them a full equivalent. In another clause he expresses a doubt whether it is right to exact personal service from the natives, and commands that a strict inquiry shall be made into the nature and value of such services as he had received, and that in all cases a fair compensation shall be allowed for them. Lastly, he makes this remarkable declaration: “ It has long been a question whether one can conscientiously

hold property in Indian slaves. Since this point has not yet been determined, I enjoin it on my son Martin and his heirs that they spare no pains to come to an exact knowledge of the truth; as a matter which deeply concerns the conscience of each of them, no less than mine.”²⁴

Such scruples of conscience, not to have been expected in Cortés, were still less likely to be met with in the Spaniards of a later generation. The state of opinion in respect to the great question of slavery, in the sixteenth century, at the commencement of the system, bears some resemblance to that which exists in our time, when we may hope it is approaching its conclusion. Las Casas and the Dominicans of the former age, the abolitionists of their day, thundered out their uncompromising invectives against the system on the broad ground of natural equity and the rights of man. The great mass of proprietors troubled their heads little about the question of right, but were satisfied with the expediency of the institution. Others, more considerate and conscientious, while they admitted the evil, found an argument for its toleration in the plea of necessity, regarding the constitution of the white man as unequal, in a sultry climate, to the

²⁴ “Item. Porque acerca de los esclavos naturales de la dicha Nueva España, así de guerra como de rescate, ha habido y hay muchas dudas y opiniones sobre si se han podido tener con buena conciencia ó no, y hasta ahora no está determinado: Mando que todo aquello que generalmente se averiguare, que en este caso se debe hacer para descargo de las conciencias en lo que toca á estos esclavos de la dicha Nueva España, que se haya y cumpla en todos los que yo tengo, é encargo y mando á D. Martin mi hijo sucesor, y á los que después dél subeedieren en mi Estado, que para averiguar esto hagan todas las diligencias que combengan al descargo de mi conciencia y suyas.” Testamento de Hernan Cortés, MS.

labor of cultivating the soil.²⁵ In one important respect the condition of slavery in the sixteenth century differed materially from its condition in the nineteenth. In the former, the seeds of the evil, but lately sown, might have been, with comparatively little difficulty, eradicated. But in our time they have struck their roots deep into the social system, and cannot be rudely handled without shaking the very foundations of the political fabric. It is easy to conceive that a man who admits all the wretchedness of the institution and its wrong to humanity may nevertheless hesitate to adopt a remedy until he is satisfied that the remedy itself is not worse than the disease. That such a remedy will come with time, who can doubt, that has confidence in the ultimate prevalence of the right and the progressive civilization of his species?

Cortés names as his executors, and as guardians of his children, the duke of Medina Sidonia, the marquis of Astorga, and the count of Aguilar. For his executors in Mexico, he appoints his wife, the marchioness, the archbishop of Toledo, and two other prelates. The will was executed at Seville, October 11th, 1547.²⁶

Finding himself much incommoded, as he grew weaker, by the presence of visitors, to which he was necessarily exposed at Seville, he withdrew to

²⁵ This is the argument controverted by Las Casas in his elaborate Memorial addressed to the government, in 1542, on the best method of arresting the destruction of the aborigines.

²⁶ This interesting document is in the Royal Archives of Seville; and a copy of it forms part of the valuable collection of Don Vargas Ponçé.

the neighboring village of Castilleja de la Cuesta, attended by his son, who watched over his dying parent with filial solicitude.²⁷ Cortés seems to have contemplated his approaching end with a composure not always to be found in those who have faced death with indifference on the field of battle. At length, having devoutly confessed his sins and received the sacrament, he expired on the 2d of December, 1547, in the sixty-third year of his age.²⁸

The inhabitants of the neighboring country were desirous to show every mark of respect to the memory of Cortés. His funeral obsequies were celebrated with due solemnity by a long train of Andalusian nobles and of the citizens of Seville, and his body was transported to the chapel of the monastery of San Isidro, in that city, where it was laid in the family vault of the duke of Medina Sidonia.²⁹ In the year 1562 it was removed, by order of his son, Don Martin, to New Spain, not, as di-

²⁷ [My friend Mr. Picard has furnished me with the copy of an inscription which may be seen, or could a few years since, on the house in which Cortés expired. "Here died, on the second of September, 1544, victim of sorrow and misfortune, the renowned Hernan Cortés, the glory of our country and the conqueror of the Mexican empire." It is strange that the author of the inscription should have made a blunder of more than three years in the date of the hero's death.]

²⁸ Zuñiga, *Annales de Sevilla*, p. 504.—Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 237.—In his last letter to the emperor, dated in February, 1544, he speaks of himself as being "sixty years of age." But he probably did not mean to be exact to a year. Gomara's statement, that he was born in the year 1485 (*Crónica*, cap. 1), is confirmed by Diaz, who tells us that Cortés used to say that when he first came over to Mexico, in 1519, he was thirty-four years old. (*Hist. de la Conquista*, cap. 205.) This would coincide with the age mentioned in the text.

²⁹ *Noticia del Archivero de la Santa Eclesia de Sevilla*, MS.

rected by his will, to Cojohuacan,* but to the monastery of St. Francis in Tezcoco, where it was laid by the side of a daughter, and of his mother, Doña Catalina Pizarro. In 1629 the remains of Cortés were again removed; and on the death of Don Pedro, fourth marquis of the Valley, it was decided by the authorities of Mexico to transfer them to the church of St. Francis, in that capital. The ceremonial was conducted with the pomp suited to the occasion. A military and religious procession was formed, with the archbishop of Mexico at its head. He was accompanied by the great dignitaries of church and state, the various associations with their respective banners, the several religious fraternities, and the members of the Audience. The coffin, containing the relics of Cortés, was covered with black velvet, and supported by the judges of the royal tribunals. On either side of it was a man in complete armor, bearing, on the right, a standard of pure white, with the arms of Castile embroidered in gold, and, on the left, a banner of black velvet, emblazoned in like manner with the armorial ensigns of the house of Cortés. Behind the corpse came the viceroy and a numerous escort of Spanish cavaliers, and the rear was closed by a battalion of infantry, armed with pikes and arquebuses, and with their banners trailing on the ground. With this funeral pomp, by the sound of mournful music, and the slow beat of the muffled drum, the procession moved forward, with measured pace, till

* [This may be accounted for by the fact that his intention to found a convent at Cuyoacan, as the place is now called, had, according to Alaman, never been carried out.—K.]

it reached the capital, when the gates were thrown open to receive the mortal remains of the hero who, a century before, had performed there such prodigies of valor.

Yet his bones were not permitted to rest here undisturbed; and in 1794 they were removed to the Hospital of Jesus of Nazareth. It was a more fitting place, since it was the same institution which, under the name of "Our Lady of the Conception," had been founded and endowed by Cortés, and which, with a fate not too frequent in similar charities, has been administered to this day on the noble principles of its foundation. The mouldering reliques of the warrior, now deposited in a crystal coffin secured by bars and plates of silver, were laid in the chapel, and over them was raised a simple monument, displaying the arms of the family, and surmounted by a bust of the Conqueror, executed in bronze by Tolsa, a sculptor worthy of the best period of the arts.³⁰

Unfortunately for Mexico, the tale does not stop here. In 1823, the patriot mob of the capital, in their zeal to commemorate the era of the national independence, and their detestation of the "old Spaniards," prepared to break open the tomb which held the ashes of Cortés, and to scatter them to the winds! The authorities declined to interfere on the occasion; but the friends of the family, as is commonly reported, entered the vault by night, and, secretly removing the reliques, prevented the commission of a sacrilege which must have left a

³⁰ The full particulars of the ceremony described in the text may be found in Appendix, No. 16, translated into English from a copy of the original document, existing in the Archives of the Hospital of Jesus, in Mexico.

stain, not easy to be effaced, on the scutcheon of the fair city of Mexico.³¹ Humboldt, forty years ago, remarked that “we may traverse Spanish America from Buenos Ayres to Monterey, and in no quarter shall we meet with a national monument which the public gratitude has raised to Christopher Columbus or Hernando Cortés.”³² It was reserved for our own age to conceive the design of violating the repose of the dead and insulting their remains! Yet the men who meditated this outrage were not the descendants of Montezuma, avenging the wrongs of their fathers and vindicating their own rightful inheritance. They were the descendants of the old Conquerors, and their countrymen, depending on the right of conquest for their ultimate title to the soil.³³

Cortés had no children by his first marriage. By his second he left four; a son, Don Martin,—the heir of his honors, and of persecutions even more severe than those of his father,³⁴—and three daughters, who formed splendid alliances. He

³¹ [The bust of Cortés and the arms of gilt bronze were secretly removed from his monument, and sent to his descendant, the duke of Monteleone, at Palermo. The remains of the Conqueror were soon after sent in the same direction, according to Doctor Mora, cited by Alaman, who does not contradict it: “Aun se habrian profanado las cenizas del héroe, sin la precaucion de personas despreocupadas, que deseando evitar el deshonor de su patria por tan reprobable e irreflexivo procedimiento, lograron ocultarlas de pronto y despues las remitieron á Italia á su familia.” *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. ii. p. 61.]

³² *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 60.

³³ [They entertained, says Alaman, the rather extravagant idea that, as descendants of the conquering nation, they were the heirs of the rights of the conquered, and bound to avenge their wrongs. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 309.]

³⁴ Don Martin Cortés, second marquis of the Valley, was accused, like his father, of an attempt to establish an independent sovereignty

left, also, five natural children, whom he particularly mentions in his testament and honorably provides for. Two of these, Don Martin, the son of Marina, and Don Luis Cortés, attained considerable distinction, and were created *comendadores* of the Order of St. Jago.³⁵

The male line of the marquises of the Valley became extinct in the third generation. The title and estates descended to a female, and by her marriage were united with those of the house of Terranova, descendants of the "Great Captain," Gonsalvo de Cordova.³⁶ By a subsequent marriage they were carried into the family of the duke of Monteleone, a Neapolitan noble. The present proprietor of these princely honors and of vast domains, both in the Old and the New World, dwells in Sicily, and

in New Spain. His natural brothers, Don Martin and Don Luis, were involved in the same accusation with himself, and the former—as I have elsewhere remarked—was in consequence subjected to the torture. Several others of his friends, on charge of abetting his treasonable designs, suffered death. The marquis was obliged to remove with his family to Spain, where the investigation was conducted; and his large estates in Mexico were sequestered until the termination of the process, a period of seven years, from 1567 to 1574, when he was declared innocent. But his property suffered irreparable injury, under the wretched administration of the royal officers, during the term of sequestration.

³⁵ [The illegitimate children were Don Martin Cortés, Don Luis Cortés, Doña Catalina Pizarro (daughter of Doña Leonor Pizarro), also two other daughters, Leonor and Maria, born of two Indian women of noble birth. Alaman, *Disertaciones históricas*, tom. ii. p. 48.]

³⁶ [Señor Alaman, in reference to this passage, says, "It is a mistake to suppose that the heirs of Cortés and Gonsalvo de Cordova were ever united by marriage. The fact appears to be that the title of duke of Terranova was held by the descendants of both; but the Terranova assigned to the Great Captain was in Calabria, while the place from which the descendants of Cortés took the title was in Sicily. *Conquista de Méjico* (trad. de Vega), tom. ii. p. 308.]

boasts a descent—such as few princes can boast—from two of the most illustrious commanders of the sixteenth century, the “Great Captain,” and the Conqueror of Mexico.

The personal history of Cortés has been so minutely detailed in the preceding narrative that it will be only necessary to touch on the more prominent features of his character. Indeed, the history of the Conquest, as I have already had occasion to remark, is necessarily that of Cortés, who is, if I may so say, not merely the soul, but the body, of the enterprise, present everywhere in person, in the thick of the fight or in the building of the works, with his sword or with his musket, sometimes leading his soldiers, and sometimes directing his little navy. The negotiations, intrigues, correspondence, are all conducted by him; and, like Cæsar, he wrote his own Commentaries in the heat of the stirring scenes which form the subject of them. His character is marked with the most opposite traits, embracing qualities apparently the most incompatible. He was avaricious, yet liberal; bold to desperation, yet cautious and calculating in his plans; magnanimous, yet very cunning; courteous and affable in his deportment, yet inexorably stern; lax in his notions of morality, yet (not uncommon) a sad bigot. The great feature of his character was constancy of purpose; a constancy not to be daunted by danger, nor baffled by disappointment, nor wearied out by impediments and delays.

He was a knight-errant, in the literal sense of

the word. Of all the band of adventurous cavaliers whom Spain, in the sixteenth century, sent forth on the career of discovery and conquest, there was none more deeply filled with the spirit of romantic enterprise than Hernando Cortés. Dangers and difficulties, instead of deterring, seemed to have a charm in his eyes. They were necessary to rouse him to a full consciousness of his powers. He grappled with them at the outset, and, if I may so express myself, seemed to prefer to take his enterprises by the most difficult side. He conceived, at the first moment of his landing in Mexico, the design of its conquest. When he saw the strength of its civilization, he was not turned from his purpose. When he was assailed by the superior force of Narvaez, he still persisted in it; and when he was driven in ruin from the capital, he still cherished his original idea. How successfully he carried it into execution, we have seen. After the few years of repose which succeeded the Conquest, his adventurous spirit impelled him to that dreary march across the marshes of Chiapa, and, after another interval, to seek his fortunes on the stormy Californian Gulf. When he found that no other continent remained for him to conquer, he made serious proposals to the emperor to equip a fleet at his own expense, with which he would sail to the Moluccas and subdue the Spice Islands for the crown of Castile!³⁷

This spirit of knight-errantry might lead us to

³⁷ "Yo me ofresco á descubrir por aquí toda la espejería, y otras Islas si huviere cerca de Molueo, ó Melaea, y la China, y aun de dar tal órden que V. M. no aiga la espejería por vía de rescate, como la

undervalue his talents as a general and to regard him merely in the light of a lucky adventurer. But this would be doing him injustice; for Cortés was certainly a great general, if that man be one who performs great achievements with the resources which his own genius has created. There is probably no instance in history where so vast an enterprise has been achieved by means apparently so inadequate. He may be truly said to have effected the Conquest by his own resources. If he was indebted for his success to the co-operation of the Indian tribes, it was the force of his genius that obtained command of such materials. He arrested the arm that was lifted to smite him, and made it do battle in his behalf. He beat the Tlascalans, and made them his stanch allies. He beat the soldiers of Narvaez, and doubled his effective force by it. When his own men deserted him, he did not desert himself. He drew them back by degrees, and compelled them to act by his will, till they were all as one man. He brought together the most miscellaneous collection of mercenaries who ever fought under one standard: adventurers from Cuba and the Isles, craving for gold; hidalgos, who came from the old country to win laurels; broken-down cavaliers, who hoped to mend their fortunes in the New World; vagabonds flying from justice; the grasping followers of Narvaez, and his own

ha el Rey de Portugal, sino que la tenga por cosa propria, y los naturales de aquellas Islas le reconoscan y sirvan como á su Rey y señor natural, porque yo me ofresco con el dicho additamento de embiar á ellas tal armada, ó *ir yo con mi persona por manera que la sojusge y pueble.*" Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

reckless veterans,—men with hardly a common tie, and burning with the spirit of jealousy and faction; wild tribes of the natives from all parts of the country, who had been sworn enemies from their cradles, and who had met only to cut one another's throats and to procure victims for sacrifice; men, in short, differing in race, in language, and in interests, with scarcely anything in common among them. Yet this motley congregation was assembled in one camp, compelled to bend to the will of one man, to consort together in harmony, to breathe, as it were, one spirit, and to move on a common principle of action! It is in this wonderful power over the discordant masses thus gathered under his banner that we recognize the genius of the great commander, no less than in the skill of his military operations.

His power over the minds of his soldiers was a natural result of their confidence in his abilities. But it is also to be attributed to his popular manners,—that happy union of authority and companionship which fitted him for the command of a band of roving adventurers. It would not have done for him to fence himself round with the stately reserve of a commander of regular forces. He was embarked with his men in a common adventure, and nearly on terms of equality, since he held his commission by no legal warrant. But, while he indulged this freedom and familiarity with his soldiers, he never allowed it to interfere with their strict obedience nor to impair the severity of discipline. When he had risen to higher consideration, although he affected more state, he still ad-

mitted his veterans to the same intimacy. "He preferred," says Diaz, "to be called 'Cortés' by us, to being called by any title; and with good reason," continues the enthusiastic old cavalier, "for the name of Cortés is as famous in our day as was that of Cæsar among the Romans, or of Hannibal among the Carthaginians."³⁸ He showed the same kind regard towards his ancient comrades in the very last act of his life. For he appropriated a sum by his will for the celebration of two thousand masses for the souls of those who had fought with him in the campaigns of Mexico.³⁹

His character has been unconsciously traced by the hand of a master:

"And oft the chieftain deigned to aid
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For, though with men of high degree
The proudest of the proud was he,

³⁸ The comparison to Hannibal is better founded than the old soldier probably imagined. Livy's description of the Carthaginian warrior has a marvellous application to Cortés,—better, perhaps, than that of the imaginary personage quoted a few lines below in the text. "Plurimum audaciae ad pericula capessenda, plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula erat: nullo labore aut corpus fatigari, aut animus vinci poterat. Caloris ac frigoris patientia par: cibi potionisque desiderio naturali, non voluptate, modus finitus: vigiliarum somnique nec die, nec nocte discriminata tempora. Id, quod gerendis rebus superesset, quieti datum; ea neque molli strato, neque silentio arcessita. Multi saepe militari sagulo opertum, humili jacentem, inter custodias stationesque militum, conspicerunt. Vestitus nihil inter æquales excellens; arma atque equi conspiciebantur. Equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in prælium ibat; ultimus conserto prælio excedebat." (Hist., lib. xxi. sec. 5.) The reader who reflects on the fate of Guatemozin may possibly think that the extract should have embraced the "perfidia plus quam Punica," in the succeeding sentence.

³⁹ Testamento de Hernan Cortés, MS.

Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldiers' hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower;—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost."

Cortés, without much violence, might have sat for this portrait of Marmion.

Cortés was not a vulgar conqueror. He did not conquer from the mere ambition of conquest. If he destroyed the ancient capital of the Aztecs, it was to build up a more magnificent capital on its ruins. If he desolated the land and broke up its existing institutions, he employed the short period of his administration in digesting schemes for introducing there a more improved culture and a higher civilization. In all his expeditions he was careful to study the resources of the country, its social organization, and its physical capacities. He enjoined it on his captains to attend particularly to these objects. If he was greedy of gold, like most of the Spanish cavaliers in the New World, it was not to hoard it, nor merely to lavish it in the support of a princely establishment, but to secure funds for prosecuting his glorious discoveries. Witness his costly expeditions to the Gulf of California. His enterprises were not undertaken solely for mercenary objects; as is shown by the various

expeditions he set on foot for the discovery of a communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In his schemes of ambition he showed a respect for the interests of science, to be referred partly to the natural superiority of his mind, but partly, no doubt, to the influence of early education. It is, indeed, hardly possible that a person of his wayward and mercurial temper should have improved his advantages at the University; but he brought away from it a tincture of scholarship seldom found among the cavaliers of the period, and which had its influence in enlarging his own conceptions. His celebrated Letters are written with a simple elegance that, as I have already had occasion to remark, have caused them to be compared to the military narrative of Cæsar. It will not be easy to find in the chronicles of the period a more concise yet comprehensive statement, not only of the events of his campaigns, but of the circumstances most worthy of notice in the character of the conquered countries.

Cortés was not cruel; at least, not cruel as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade. The path of the conqueror is necessarily marked with blood. He was not too scrupulous, indeed, in the execution of his plans. He swept away the obstacles which lay in his track; and his fame is darkened by the commission of more than one act which his boldest apologists will find it hard to vindicate. But he was not wantonly cruel. He allowed no outrage on his unresisting foes. This may seem small praise; but it is an exception to the usual conduct of his countrymen in their conquests,

and it is something to be in advance of one's time. He was severe, it may be added, in enforcing obedience to his orders for protecting their persons and their property. With his licentious crew, it was, sometimes, not without a hazard that he was so. After the Conquest, he sanctioned the system of *repartimientos*; but so did Columbus. He endeavored to regulate it by the most humane laws, and continued to suggest many important changes for ameliorating the condition of the natives. The best commentary on his conduct in this respect is the deference that was shown him by the Indians, and the confidence with which they appealed to him for protection in all their subsequent distresses.

In private life he seems to have had the power of attaching to himself warmly those who were near his person. The influence of his attachment is shown in every page of Bernal Diaz, though his work was written to vindicate the claims of the soldiers in opposition to those of the general. He seems to have led a happy life with his first wife, in their humble retirement in Cuba, and regarded the second, to judge from the expressions in his testament, with confidence and love. Yet he cannot be acquitted from the charge of those licentious gallantries which entered too generally into the character of the military adventurer of that day. He would seem also, by the frequent suits in which he was involved, to have been of an irritable and contentious spirit. But much allowance must be made for the irritability of a man who had been too long accustomed to independent sway, patiently to endure the checks and control of the petty

spirits who were incapable of comprehending the noble character of his enterprises. "He thought," says an eminent writer, "to silence his enemies by the brilliancy of the new career on which he had entered. He did not reflect that these enemies had been raised by the very grandeur and rapidity of his success."⁴⁰ He was rewarded for his efforts by the misinterpretation of his motives; by the calumnious charges of squandering the public revenues and of aspiring to independent sovereignty. But, although we may admit the foundation of many of the grievances alleged by Cortés, yet, when we consider the querulous tone of his correspondence and the frequency of his litigation, we may feel a natural suspicion that his proud spirit was too sensitive to petty slights and too jealous of imaginary wrongs.

One trait more remains to be noticed in the character of this remarkable man; that is, his bigotry, the failing of the age,—for surely it should be termed only a failing.⁴¹ When we see the hand, red with the blood of the wretched native, raised to invoke the blessing of Heaven on the cause which it maintains, we experience something like a sensation of disgust at the act, and a doubt of its sin-

⁴⁰ Humboldt, *Essai politique*, tom. ii. p. 267.

⁴¹ An extraordinary anecdote is related by Cavo of this bigotry (shall we call it policy?) of Cortés. "In Mexico," says the historian, "it is commonly reported that after the Conquest he commanded that on Sundays and holidays all should attend, under pain of a certain number of stripes, to the expounding of the Scriptures. The general was himself guilty of an omission on one occasion, and, after having listened to the admonition of the priest, submitted, with edifying humility, to be chastised by him, to the unspeakable amazement of the Indians." *Hist. de los tres Siglos*, tom. i. p. 151.

cerity. But this is unjust. We should throw ourselves back (it cannot be too often repeated) into the age,—the age of the Crusades. For every Spanish cavalier, however sordid and selfish might be his private motives, felt himself to be the soldier of the Cross. Many of them would have died in defence of it. Whoever has read the correspondence of Cortés, or, still more, has attended to the circumstances of his career, will hardly doubt that he would have been among the first to lay down his life for the Faith. He more than once perilled life, and fortune, and the success of his whole enterprise, by the premature and most impolitic manner in which he would have forced conversion on the natives.⁴² To the more rational spirit of the present day, enlightened by a purer Christianity, it may seem difficult to reconcile gross deviations from morals with such devotion to the cause of religion. But the religion taught in that day was one of form and elaborate ceremony. In the punctilious attention to discipline, the spirit of Christianity was permitted to evaporate. The mind, occupied with forms, thinks little of substance. In a worship that is addressed too exclusively to the senses, it is often the case that morality becomes divorced from religion, and the measure of righteousness is determined by the creed rather than by the conduct.

In the earlier part of the History I have given a

⁴² "Al Rey infinitas tierras,
Y a Dios infinitas almas,"

says Lope de Vega, commemorating in this couplet the double glory of Cortés. It is the light in which the Conquest was viewed by every devout Spaniard of the sixteenth century.

description of the person of Cortés.⁴³ It may be well to close this review of his character by the account of his manners and personal habits left us by Bernal Diaz, the old chronicler, who has accompanied us through the whole course of our narrative, and who may now fitly furnish the conclusion of it. No man knew his commander better; and, if the avowed object of his work might naturally lead to a disparagement of Cortés, this is more than counterbalanced by the warmth of his personal attachment, and by that *esprit de corps* which leads him to take a pride in the renown of his general.

“In his whole appearance and presence,” says Diaz, “in his discourse, his table, his dress, in everything, in short, he had the air of a great lord. His clothes were in the fashion of the time; he set little value on silk, damask, or velvet, but dressed plainly and exceedingly neat;⁴⁴ nor did he wear massy chains of gold, but simply a fine one, of exquisite workmanship, from which was suspended a jewel having the figure of our Lady the Virgin and her precious Son, with a Latin motto cut upon it. On his finger he wore a splendid diamond ring; and from his cap, which, according to the fashion of that day, was of velvet, hung a medal, the device of which I do not remember. He was magnificently attended, as became a man of his rank, with chamberlains and major-domos and many pages; and the service of his table was splendid, with a quantity of both gold and silver plate. At noon

⁴³ *Ante*, vol. i. p. 325.

“So Gomara: “He dressed neatly rather than richly, and was always scrupulously clean.” *Crónica*, cap. 238.

he dined heartily, drinking about a pint of wine mixed with water. He supped well, though he was not dainty in regard to his food, caring little for the delicacies of the table, unless, indeed, on such occasions as made attention to these matters of some consequence.⁴⁵

“ He was acquainted with Latin, and, as I have understood, was made Bachelor of Laws; and when he conversed with learned men who addressed him in Latin, he answered them in the same language. He was also something of a poet; his conversation was agreeable, and he had a pleasant elocution. In his attendance on the services of the Church he was most punctual, devout in his manner, and charitable to the poor.⁴⁶

“ When he swore, he used to say, ‘ On my conscience;’ and when he was vexed with any one, ‘ Evil betide you.’ With his men he was very patient; and they were sometimes impertinent and even insolent. When very angry, the veins in his throat and forehead would swell, but he uttered no reproaches against either officer or soldier.

“ He was fond of cards and dice, and, when he played, was always in good humor, indulging freely in jests and repartees. He was affable with his followers, especially with those who came over with him from Cuba. In his campaigns he paid strict attention to discipline, frequently going the rounds himself during the night, and seeing that

⁴⁵ “ *Fué mui gran comedor, i templado en el beber, teniendo abundancia. Sufria mucho la hambre con necesidad.*” *Ibid, ubi supra.*

⁴⁶ He dispensed a thousand ducats every year in his ordinary charities, according to Gomara. “ *Grandísimo limosnero; daba cada un año mil ducados de limosna ordinaria.*” *Crónica, cap. 238.*

the sentinels did their duty. He entered the quarters of his soldiers without ceremony, and chided those whom he found without their arms and accoutrements, saying, ‘ It was a bad sheep that could not carry its own wool.’ On the expedition to Honduras he acquired the habit of sleeping after his meals, feeling unwell if he omitted it; and, however sultry or stormy the weather, he caused a carpet or his cloak to be thrown under a tree, and slept soundly for some time. He was frank and exceedingly liberal in his disposition, until the last few years of his life, when he was accused of parsimony. But we should consider that his funds were employed on great and costly enterprises, and that none of these, after the Conquest, neither his expedition to Honduras nor his voyages to California, were crowned with success. It was perhaps intended that he should receive his recompense in a better world; and I fully believe it; for he was a good cavalier, most true in his devotions to the Virgin, to the Apostle St. Peter, and to all the other Saints.”⁴⁷

Such is the portrait, which has been left to us by the faithful hand most competent to trace it, of Hernando Cortés, the Conqueror of Mexico.

⁴⁷ Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 203.

APPENDIX

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

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ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

No. 1.—See vol. i. p. 166

ADVICE OF AN AZTEC MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTER;
TRANSLATED FROM SAHAGUN'S "HISTORIA DE
NUEVA-ESPAÑA," LIB. VI. CAP. XIX

[I have thought it best to have this translation made in the most literal manner, that the reader may have a correct idea of the strange mixture of simplicity, approaching to childishness, and moral sublimity, which belongs to the original. It is the product of the twilight of civilization.]

My beloved daughter, very dear little dove, you have already heard and attended to the words which your father has told you. They are precious words, and such as are rarely spoken or listened to, and which have proceeded from the bowels and heart in which they were treasured up; and your beloved father well knows that you are his daughter, begotten of him, are his blood, and his flesh; and God our Lord knows that it is so. Although you are a woman, and are *the image of your father*, what more can I say to you than has already been said? What more can you hear than what you have heard from your lord and father? who has fully told you what it is becoming for you to do and to avoid; nor is there anything

remaining, which concerns you, that he has not touched upon. Nevertheless, that I may do towards you my whole duty, I will say to you some few words.—The first thing that I earnestly charge upon you is, that you observe and do not forget what your father has now told you, since it is all very precious; and persons of his condition rarely publish such things; for they are the words which belong to the noble and wise,—valuable as rich jewels. See, then, that you take them and lay them up in your heart, and write them in your bowels. If God gives you life, with these same words will you teach your sons and daughters, if God shall give you them.—The second thing that I desire to say to you is, that I love you much, that you are my dear daughter. Remember that nine months I bore you in my womb, that you were born and brought up in my arms. I placed you in your cradle, and in my lap, and with my milk I nursed you. This I tell you, in order that you may know that I and your father are the source of your being; it is we who now instruct you. See that you receive our words, and treasure them in your breast.—Take care that your garments are such as are decent and proper; and observe that you do not adorn yourself with much finery, since this is a mark of vanity and of folly. As little becoming is it, that your dress should be very mean, dirty, or ragged; since rags are a mark of the low, and of those who are held in contempt. Let your clothes be becoming and neat, that you may neither appear fantastic nor mean. When you speak, do not hurry your words from uneasiness, but speak deliberately and calmly. Do not raise your voice very high, nor speak very low, but in a moderate tone. Neither mince, when you speak, nor when you salute, nor speak through your nose; but let your words be proper, of a good sound, and your voice gentle. Do not be nice in the choice of your words. In walking, my daughter, see that you behave becom-

ingly, neither going with haste, nor too slowly; since it is an evidence of being puffed up, to walk too slowly, and walking hastily causes a vicious habit of restlessness and instability. Therefore neither walk very fast, nor very slow; yet, when it shall be necessary to go with haste, do so,—in this use your discretion. And when you may be obliged to jump over a pool of water, do it with decency, that you may neither appear clumsy nor light. When you are in the street, do not carry your head much inclined, or your body bent; nor as little go with your head very much raised; since it is a mark of ill breeding; walk erect, and with your head slightly inclined. Do not have your mouth covered, or your face, from shame, nor go looking like a near-sighted person, nor, on your way, make fantastic movements with your feet. Walk through the street quietly, and with propriety. Another thing that you must attend to, my daughter, is, that when you are in the street you do not go looking hither and thither, nor turning your head to look at this and that; walk neither looking at the skies nor on the ground. Do not look upon those whom you meet with the eyes of an offended person, nor have the appearance of being uneasy; but of one who looks upon all with a serene countenance; doing this, you will give no one occasion of being offended with you. Show a becoming countenance; that you may neither appear morose, nor, on the other hand, too complaisant. See, my daughter, that you give yourself no concern about the words you may hear, in going through the street, nor pay any regard to them, let those that come and go say what they will. Take care that you neither answer nor speak, but act as if you neither heard nor understood them; since, doing in this manner, no one will be able to say with truth that you have said anything amiss. See, likewise, my daughter, that you never paint your face, or stain it or your lips with colors, in order to appear well; since

this is a mark of vile and unchaste women. Paints and coloring are things which bad women use,—the immodest, who have lost all shame and even sense, who are like fools and drunkards, and are called *rameras* [prostitutes]. But, that your husband may not dislike you, adorn yourself, wash yourself, and cleanse your clothes; and let this be done with moderation; since if every day you wash yourself and your clothes it will be said of you that you are over-nice—too delicate; they will call you *tape-petzon tinemaxoch*.—My daughter, this is the course you are to take; since in this manner the ancestors from whom you spring brought us up. Those noble and venerable dames, your grandmothers, told us not so many things as I have told you,—they said but few words, and spoke thus: “Listen, my daughters; in this world it is necessary to live with much prudence and circumspection. Hear this allegory, which I shall now tell you, and preserve it, and take from it a warning and example for living aright. Here, in this world, we travel by a very narrow, steep, and dangerous road, which is as a lofty mountain ridge, on whose top passes a narrow path; on either side is a great gulf without bottom; and if you deviate from the path you will fall into it. There is need, therefore, of much discretion in pursuing the road.” My tenderly loved daughter, my little dove, keep this illustration in your heart, and see that you do not forget it,—it will be to you as a lamp and a beacon so long as you shall live in this world. Only one thing remains to be said, and I have done. If God shall give you life, if you shall continue some years upon the earth, see that you guard yourself carefully, that no stain come upon you; should you forfeit your chastity and afterwards be asked in marriage and should marry any one, you will never be fortunate, nor have true love,—he will always remember that you were not a virgin, and this will be the cause of great affliction and distress; you will

never be at peace, for your husband will always be suspicious of you. O my dearly beloved daughter, if you shall live upon the earth, see that not more than one man approaches you; and observe what I now shall tell you, as a strict command. When it shall please God that you receive a husband, and you are placed under his authority, be free from arrogance, see that you do not neglect him, nor allow your heart to be in opposition to him. Be not disrespectful to him. Beware that in no time or place you commit the treason against him called adultery. See that you give no favor to another; since this, my dear and much-loved daughter, is to fall into a pit without bottom, from which there will be no escape. According to the custom of the world, if it shall be known, for this crime they will kill you, they will throw you into the street, for an example to all the people, where your head will be crushed and dragged upon the ground. Of these says a proverb, "You will be stoned and dragged upon the earth, and others will take warning at your death." From this will arise a stain and dishonor upon our ancestors, the nobles and senators from whom we are descended. You will tarnish their illustrious fame, and their glory, by the filthiness and impurity of your sin. You will, likewise, lose your reputation, your nobility, and honor of birth; your name will be forgotten and abhorred. Of you will it be said that you were buried in the dust of your sins. And remember, my daughter, that, though no man shall see you, nor your husband ever know what happens, *God, who is in every place, sees you*, will be angry with you, and will also excite the indignation of the people against you, and will be avenged upon you as he shall see fit. By his command you shall either be maimed, or struck blind, or your body will wither, or you will come to extreme poverty, for daring to injure your husband. Or perhaps he will give you to death, and put you under his

feet, sending you to the place of torment. Our Lord is compassionate; but, if you commit treason against your husband, God, who is in every place, shall take vengeance on your sin, and will permit you to have neither contentment, nor repose, nor a peaceful life; and he will excite your husband to be always unkind towards you, and always to speak to you with anger. My dear daughter, whom I tenderly love, see that you live in the world in peace, tranquillity, and contentment, all the days that you shall live. See that you disgrace not yourself, that you stain not your honor, nor pollute the lustre and fame of your ancestors. See that you honor me and your father, and reflect glory on us by your good life. May God prosper you, my first-born, and may you come to God, who is in every place.

No. II.—See vol. i. p. 188

A CASTILIAN AND AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A POEM ON THE MUTABILITY OF LIFE, BY NEZA-HUALCOYOTL, LORD OF TEZCUCO

[This poem was fortunately rescued from the fate of too many of the Indian MSS., by the chevalier Boturini, and formed part of his valuable *Muséo*. It was subsequently incorporated in the extensive collection of documents made by Father Manuel de la Vega, in Mexico, 1792. This magnificent collection was made in obedience to an enlightened order of the Spanish government, “that all such MSS. as could be found in New Spain, fitted to illustrate the antiquities, geography, civil, ecclesiastical, and natural history of America, should be copied and transmitted to Madrid.”]

This order was obeyed, and the result was a collection of thirty-two volumes in folio, which, amidst much that is trivial and of little worth, contains also a mass of original materials, of inestimable value to the historian of Mexico and of the various races who occupied the country of New Spain.]

Un rato cantar quiero,
pues la ocasion y el tiempo se ofrece;
ser admitido espero,
si intento lo merece;
y comienzo mi canto,
aunque fuera mejor llamarle llanto.

Y tú, querido Amigo,
goza la amenidad de aquestas flores,
alégrate conmigo;
desechemos de pena los temores,
que el gusto trae medida,
por ser al fin con fin la mala vida.

Io tocaré cantando
el músico instrumento sonoro,
tú de flores gozando
danza, y festeja á Dios que es Poderoso,
gocemos de esta gloria,
porque la humana vida es transitoria.

De Oblehacan pusiste
en esta noble Corte, y siendo tuyo,
tus sillas, y quisiste
vestirlas; donde arguyo,
que con grandeza tanta
el Imperio se aumenta y se levanta.

Oyoyotzin prudente,
famoso Rey y singular Monarca,
goza del bien presente,
que lo presente lo florido abarca;

porque vendrá algun dia
que busques este gusto y alegría.

Entonces tu Fortuna
te ha de quitar el Cetro de la mano,
ha de menguar tu Luna,
no te verás tan fuerte y tan ufano ;
entonces tus criados
de todo bien serán desamparados.

Y en tan triste suceso
los nobles descendientes de tu nido,
de Príncipes el peso,
los que de nobles Padres han nacido,
faltando tú Cabeza,
gustarán la armargura de pobreza.

Y traerán á la memoria
quien fuiste en pompa de todos envidiada
tus triunfos y victoria ;
y con la gloria y Magestad pasada
cotejando pesares,
de lágrimas harán crecidas Mares.

Y estos tus descendientes,
que te sirven de pluma y de corona
de tí viéndose ausentes,
de Culhuacan estrañarán la cuna,
y tenidos por tales
con sus desdichas crecerán sus males.

Y de esta grandeza rara,
digna de mil coronas y blasones,
será la fama avara ;
solo se acordarán en las naciones,
lo bien que governaron,
las tres Cabezas que el imperio honraron.

En México famosa
Moctezumá, valor de pecho Indiano ;
á Culhuacan dichosa
de Neçahualcoyotl rigió la mano ;
Acatlapan la fuerte

Totoquilhuastli le salió por suerte.

Y ningun olvido temo
de lo bien que tu reyno dispusiste,
estando en le supremo
lugar, que de la mano recibiste
de aquel Señor del Mundo,
factor de aquellas cosas sin segundo.

Y goza pues muy gustoso,
O Neçahualcoyotl, lo que agora tienes
con flores de este hermoso
jardin corona tus ilustres sienes ;
oye mi canto, y lira
que á darte gustos y placeres tira.

Y los gustos de esta vida,
sus riquezas, y mandos son prestados,
son sustancia fingida,
con apariencias solo matizados ;
y es tan gran verdad esta,
que á una pregunta me has de dar respuesta,

¿ Y que es de Cihuapan,
y Quantzintecomtzin el valiente,
y Conahuatzin ;
que es de toda esa gente ?
sus voces ; ¡ agora acaso !
ya están en la otra vida, este es el caso.

¡ Ojala los, que agora
juntos los tiene del amor el hilo,
que amistad atesora,
vieramos de la muerte el duro filo !
porque no hay bien seguro,
que siempre trae mudanza á lo futuro.

Now would I sing, since time and place
Are mine,—and oh ! with thee
May this my song obtain the grace
My purpose claims for me.

I wake these notes on song intent,
 But call it rather a lament.
 Do thou, beloved, now delight
 In these my flowers, pure and bright,
 Rejoicing with thy friend;
 Now let us banish pain and fear,
 For, if our joys are measured here,
 Life's sadness hath its end.

And I will strike, to aid my voice,
 The deep, sonorous chord;
 Thou, dancing, in these flowers rejoice
 And feast Earth's mighty Lord;
 Seize we the glories of to-day,
 For mortal life fleets fast away.—
 In Ocblehacan, all thine own,
 Thy hand hath placed the noble throne.
 Which thou hast richly dressed;
 From whence I argue that thy sway
 Shall be augmented day by day,
 In rising greatness blessed.

Wise Oyoyotzin! prudent king!
 Unrivalled Prince, and great!
 Enjoy the fragrant flowers that spring
 Around thy kingly state;
 A day will come which shall destroy
 Thy present bliss,—thy present joy,—
 When fate the sceptre of command
 Shall wrench from out thy royal hand,—
 Thy moon diminished rise;
 And, as thy pride and strength are quenched,
 From thy adherents shall be wrenched
 All that they love or prize.

When sorrow shall my truth attest,
And this thy throne decline,—
The birds of thy ancestral nest,
The princes of thy line,—
The mighty of thy race,—shall see
The bitter ills of poverty ;—
And then shall memory recall
Thy envied greatness, and on all
Thy brilliant triumphs dwell;
And as they think on by-gone years,
Compared with present shame, their tears
Shall to an ocean swell.

And those who, though a royal band,
Serve thee for crown, or plume,
Remote from Culhuacan's land
Shall find the exile's doom.
Deprived of thee,—their rank forgot,
Misfortune shall o'erwhelm their lot.
Then fame shall grudgingly withhold
Her meed to greatness, which of old
Blazons and crowns displayed;
The people will retain alone
Remembrance of that *triple throne*
Which this our land obeyed.

Brave Moctezuma's Indian land
Was Mexico the great,
And Nezahualcoyotl's hand
Blessed Culhuacan's state,
Whilst Totoquil his portion drew
In Acatlapan, strong and true;
But no oblivion can I fear,
Of good by thee accomplished here,
Whilst high upon thy throne;

That station, which, to match thy worth,
Was given by the Lord of Earth,
 Maker of good alone.

Then, Nezahualcoyotl,—now,
 In what thou *hast*, delight;
And wreath around thy royal brow
 Life's garden blossoms bright;
List to my lyre and my lay,
Which aim to please thee and obey.
The pleasures which our lives present—
Earth's sceptres, and its wealth—are lent,
 Are shadows fleeting by;
Appearance colors all our bliss;
A truth so great, that now to this
 One question, make reply.

What has become of Cihuapan,
 Quantzintecomitzin brave,
And Conahuatzin, mighty man;
 Where are they? In the grave!
Their names remain, but they are fled,
Forever numbered with the dead.
Would that those now in friendship bound,
We whom Love's thread encircles round,
 Death's cruel edge might see!
Since good on earth is insecure,
And all things must a change endure
 In dark futurity!

No. III.—See vol. i. p. 196

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESIDENCE OF NEZAHUALCOYOTL AT TEZCOTZINCO, EXTRACTED FROM IXTLILXOCHITL'S "HISTORIA CHICHIMECA," MS., CAP. XLII

De los jardines el mas ameno y de curiosidades fué el Bosque de Tezcoztzinco; porque demas de la cerca tan grande que tenia, para subir á la cumbre de él, y andarlo todo, tenia sus gradas, parte de ellas de argamasa, parte labrada en la misma peña; y el agua que se trahia para las Fuentes, Pilas, y Baños, y los caños que se repartian para el riego de las Flores y arboledas de este Bosque, para poderla traer desde su Nacimiento, fué menester hacer fuertes y altíssimas murallas de argamasa desde unas sierras á otras, de increíble grandeza; sobre la qual hizo una Fargea hasta venir á dar á la mas alta del Bosque, y á las espaldas de la cumbre de él. En el primer Estanque de Agua estaba una Peña esculpida en ella en circunferencia los años desde que havia nacido el Rey Nezahualcoiotzin hasta la edad de aquel tiempo; y por la parte de afuera los años en fin de cada uno de ellos, así mismo esculpidas las cosas mas memorables que hizo; y por dentro de la rueda esculpidas sus Armas, que eran una casa, que estaba ardiendo, en llamas y desaciéndose; otra que estaba muy ennoblecida de edificios; y en medio de las dos un pie de venado, atada en él una piedra preciosa, y salian del pie unos penachos de plumas preciosas, y así mismo una cierva, y en ella un Brazo asido de un Arco con unas Flechas, y como un Hombre armado con su Morrion y oregeras, coselete, y dos tigres á los Lados, de cuyas bocas salian agua y fuego, y por orla, doce cabezas de Reyes y Señores, y otras cosas que el primer Arzobispo de México, Don Fray Juan de Zumarraga, mandó hacer pedazos, entendiendo ser algunos Ido-

los; y todo lo referido era la etimología de sus Armas. Y de allí se partía esta agua en dos partes, que la una iba cercando y rodeando el Bosque por la parte del Norte, y la otra por la parte del Sur. En la cumbre de este Bosque estaban edificadas unas casas á manera de torre, y por remate y Chapitel estaba hecha de cantería una como á manera de Mazeta, y dentra de ella salian unos Penachos y plumeros, que era la etimología del nombre del Bosque; y luego mas abajo, hecho de una Peña, un Leon de mas de dos brazas de largo con sus alas y plumas: estaba hechado y mirando á la parte del Oriente, en cuia boca asomaba un rostro, que era el mismo retrato del Rey, el qual Leon estaba de ordinario debajo de un palio hecho de oro y plumería. Un poquito mas abajo estaban tres Albercas de agua, y en la de en medio estaban en sus Bordos tres Damas esculpidas y labradas en la misma Peña, que significaban la gran Laguna y las Ramas las cabezas del Imperio; y por un lado (que era hacia la parte del Norte) otra Alberca, y en una Peña esculpido el nombre y Escudo de Armas de la Ciudad de Tolan, que fué cabecera de los Tultecas; y por el lado izquierdo, que caia hacia la parte del Sur, estaba la otra Alberca, y en la peña esculpido el Escudo de Armas y nombre de la Ciudad de Tenaiocan, que fué la cabecera del Imperio de los Chichimecas; y de esta Alberca salia un caño de Agua, que saltando sobre unas peñas salpicaba el Agua, que iba á caer á un Jardin de todas flores olorosas de Tierra caliente, que parecia que llovía con la precipitacion y golpe que daba el agua sobre la peña. Tras este jardin se seguian los Baños hechos y labrados de peña viva, que con dividirse en dos Baños eran de una pieza; y por aquí se bajaba por una peña grandísima de unas gradas hechas de la misma peña, tan bien gravadas y lizas, que parecian Espejos; y por el pretil de estas gradas estaba esculpido el dia, mes, y año, y hora, en que se le dió aviso al Rey Nezahualcoiotzin de la muerte de un Señor de Huexotzinco, á quien quisó y amó notable-

mente, y le cojío esta nueva quando se estaban haciendo estas gradas. Luego consecutivamente estaba el Alcazar y Palacio que el Rey tenia en el Bosque, en los quales havia, entre otras muchas salas, aposentos, y retretes, una muy grandísima, y delante de ella un Patio, en la qual recivia á los Reyes de México y Tlacopan, y á otros Grandes Señores, quando se iban á holgar con él, y en el Patio se hacian las Damas, y algunas representaciones de gusto y entretenimiento. Estaban estos alcazares con tan admirable y maravillosa hechura, y con tanta diversidad de piedras, que no parecian ser hechos de industria humana. El Aposento donde el Rey dormia era redondo; todo lo demas de este Bosque, como dicho tengo, estaba plantado de diversidad de Árboles, y flores odoríferas, y en ellos diversidad de Aves, sin las que el Rey tenia en jaulas, traidas de diversas partes, que hacian una armonia, y canto, que no se oian las Gentes. Fuera de las florestas, que las dividia, una Pared entraba la Montaña, en que havia muchos venados, conejos, y liebres, que si de cada cosa muy particular se describiese, y de los demas Bosques de este Reyno, era menester hacer Historia muy particular.

No. IV.—See vol. i. p. 215

TRANSLATIONS FROM IXTLILXOCHITL'S "HISTORIA CHICHIMECA," MS., CAP. LXIV

OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SEVERITY WITH WHICH THE KING NEZAHUALPILLI PUNISHED THE MEXICAN QUEEN FOR HER ADULTERY AND TREASON

When Axaiacatzin, king of Mexico, and other lords, sent their daughters to king Nezahualpilli, for him to choose one to be his queen and lawful wife, whose son might succeed to the inheritance, she who had highest claims among them, from nobility of birth and rank, was Cha-

chiuhnenetzin, daughter of the Mexican king. But, being at that time very young, she was brought up by the monarch in a separate palace, with great pomp and numerous attendants, as became the daughter of so great a king. The number of servants attached to her household exceeded two thousand. Young as she was, she was yet exceedingly artful and vicious; so that, finding herself alone, and seeing that her people feared her, on account of her rank and importance, she began to give way to the unlimited indulgence of her lust. Whenever she saw a young man who pleased her fancy, she gave secret orders to have him brought to her, and, having satisfied her desires, caused him to be put to death. She then ordered a statue or effigy of his person to be made, and adorning it with rich clothing, gold, and jewelry, had it placed in the apartment in which she lived. The number of statues of those whom she thus put to death was so great as almost to fill the apartment. When the king came to visit her, and inquired respecting these statues, she answered that they were her gods; and he, knowing how strict the Mexicans were in the worship of their false deities, believed her. But as no iniquity can be long committed with entire secrecy, she was finally found out in this manner. Three of the young men, for some reason or other, she had left alive. Their names were Chiculcoatl, Huitzilimitzin, and Maxtla, one of whom was lord of Tesoyucan, and one of the grandees of the kingdom; and the other two, nobles of high rank. It happened that one day the king recognized on one of these a very precious jewel, which he had given to the queen; and, although he had no fear of treason on her part, it gave him some uneasiness. Proceeding to visit her that night, her attendants told him that she was asleep, supposing that the king would then return, as he had done at other times. But the affair of the jewel made him insist on entering the chamber in which she slept; and, going to awake her, he found only a statue in the bed, adorned with

her hair, and closely resembling her. This being seen by the king, and also that the attendants around were in much trepidation and alarm, he called his guards, and, assembling all the people of the house, made a general search for the queen, who was shortly found, at an entertainment with the three young lords, who were likewise arrested with her. The king referred the case to the judges of his court, in order that they might make an inquiry into the matter and examine the parties implicated. These discovered many individuals, servants of the queen, who had in some way or other been accessory to her crimes, workmen who had been engaged in making and adorning the statues, others who had aided in introducing the young men into the palace, and others again who had put them to death and concealed their bodies. The case having been sufficiently investigated, he despatched ambassadors to the kings of Mexico and Tlacopan, giving them information of the event, and signifying the day on which the punishment of the queen and her accomplices was to take place; and he likewise sent through the empire to summon all the lords to bring their wives and their daughters, however, young they might be, to be witnesses of a punishment which he designed for a great example. He also made a truce with all the enemies of the empire, in order that they might come freely to see it. The time being arrived, so great was the concourse of people gathered on the occasion, that, large as was the city of Tezcuco, they could scarcely all find room in it. The execution took place publicly, in sight of the whole city. The queen was put to the *garrote* [a method of strangling by means of a rope twisted round a stick], as well as her three gallants; and, from their being persons of high birth, their bodies were burned, together with the effigies before mentioned. The other parties who had been accessory to the crime, who were more than two thousand persons, were also put to the *garrote*, and buried in a pit made for the purpose in a ra-

vine near a temple of the Idol of Adulterers. All applauded so severe and exemplary a punishment, except the Mexican lords, the relations of the queen, who were much incensed at so public an example, and, although for the present they concealed their resentment, meditated future revenge. It was not without cause that the king experienced this disgrace in his household, since he was thus punished for the unworthy means made use of by his father to obtain his mother as a wife.

No. V.—See vol. i. p. 316

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY VELASQUEZ, GOVERNOR OF
CUBA, TO CORTÉS ON HIS TAKING COMMAND OF
THE EXPEDITION; DATED AT FERNANDINA, OC-
TOBER 23, 1518

[The instrument forms part of the Muñoz collection.]

Por quanto yo Diego Velasquez, Alcalde, capitan general, é repartidor de los caciques é yndios de esta isla Fernandina por sus Altezas, &c., embié los dias pasados, en nombre é servicio de sus Altezas, aver é bojar la ysla de Yucatan S^{ta} María de los remedios, que nuevamente habia descubierto, é á descobrir lo demas que Dios N^{ro} S^{or} fuese servido, y en nombre de sus Altezas tomar la posesion de todo, una armada con la gente necesaria, en que fué é nombre por capitan della á Juan de Grijalva, vezino de la villa de la Trinidad desta ysla, el qual me embió una caravela de las que llevava, porque le facia mucha agua, é en ella cierta gente, que los Indios en la dicha S^{ta} María de los remedios le habian herido, é otros adolecido, y con la razon de todo lo que le habia ocurrido hasta otras yslas é tierras que de nuevo descubrió; que la una es una ysla que se dice

Cozumel, é le puso por nombre S^{ta} Cruz; y otra es una tierra grande, que parte della se llama Ulua, que puso por nombre S^{ta} María de las Niebes; desde donde me embió la dicha caravela é gente, é me escribió como iba siguiendo su demanda principalmente á saber si aquella tierra era Isla, ó tierra firme; é ha muchos dias que de razon habia de haber sabido nueva dél, de que se presume, pues tal nueva dél fasta oy no se sabe, que debe de tener ó estar en alguna ó estrema necesidad de socorro: é así mesmo porque una caravela, que yo embió al dicho Juan de Grijalva desdel puerto desta cibdad de Santiago, para que con él é la armada que lleva se juntase en el puerto de Sⁿ Cristóbal de la Havana, porque muy mas proveido de todo é como al servicio de sus Altezas convenia fuesen, quando llegó donde pensó fallarle, el d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva se habia hecho á la bela é hera ido con toda la dicha armada, puesto que dejó abiso del viage que la d^{ha} carabela habia de llebar; é como la d^{ha} carabela, en que iban ochenta, ó noventa hombres, no falló la d^{ha} armada, tomó el dicho aviso, y fué en seguimiento del d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva; y segun paresze é se ha sabido por informacion de las personas feridas é dolientes, que el d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva me embió, no se habia juntado con él, ni della habia habido ninguna nueba, ni los d^{hos} dolientes ni feridos la supiéron á la buelta, puesto que viniéron mucha parte del biage costa á costa de la ysla de S^{ta} M^a de los remedios por donde habian ydo; de que se presume que con tiempo forzoso podria de caer acia tierra firme, ó llegar á alguna parte donde los dichos ochenta ó noventa ombres españoles corran detrimiento por el nabio, ó por ser pocos, ó por andar perdidos en busca del d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva, puesto que iban muy bien pertrechados de todo lo necesario; ademas de esto porque despues que con el d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva embió la dicha armada he sido informado de muy cierto por un yndio de los de la d^{ha} ysla de Yucatan S^{ta} María de los remedios, como en poder de ciertos Caciques principales

della están seis cristianos cautibos, y los tienen por esclavos, é se sirben dellos en sus haciendas, que los tomáron muchos dias ha de una carabela que con tiempo por allí diz que aportó perdida, que se cree que alguno dellos deve ser Nicuesa capitán, que el católico Rey Dⁿ Fernando de gloriosa memoria mandó ir á tierra firme, é redimirlos seria grandísimo servicio de Dios N^r S^r é de sus Altezas: por todo lo qual pareciéndome que al servicio de Dios N^r S^r é de sus Altezas convenia inhiar así en seguimiento é socorro de la d^{ha} armada quel d^{ho} Juan de Grijalva llebó, y busca de la carabela que tras él en su seguimiento fué como á redimir si posible fuese los d^{hos} cristianos que en poder de los d^{hos} Indios están cabtivos; acordé, habiendo muchas veces pensado, é pesado, é platicádolo con personas cuerda, de embiar como embié otra armada tal, é tambien bastecida é aparejada ansí de nabíos é mantenimientos como de gente è todo lo demas para semejante negocio necesario; que si por caso á la gente de la otra primera armada, ó de la d^{ha} carabela que fué en su seguimiento hallase en alguna parte cerca de infieles, sea bastante para los socorrer ó descercar; é si ansí no los hallare, por sí sola pueda seguramente andar é calar en su busca todas aquellas yslas tierras, é saber el secreto dellas, y faser todo lo demas que al servicio è de Dios N^r S^r cumpla é al de sus Altezas combenga: é para ello he acordado de la encomendar á vos Fernando Cortés, é os imbiar por capitán della, por la experiencia que de vos tengo del tiempo que ha que en esta ysla en mi compañía habeis servido á sus Altezas, confiando que soys persona cuerda, y que con toda pendencia é zelo de su real servicio daréis buena razon é quenta de todo lo que por mí en nombre de sus Altezas os fuere mandado acerca de la dicha negociacion, y la guiaréis ó encaminaréis como mas al servicio de Dios N^r S^r é de sus Altezas combenga; y porque mejor guiada la negociacion de todo vaya, lo que habeis de fazer, y mirar, é con mucha vigilancia y diligencia ynquirir é saber, es lo siguiente.

1. Hágase el servicio de Dios en todo, y quien saltaré castiga con rigor.
2. Castigaréis en particular la fornicacion.
3. Proibiréis dados y naipes, ocasion de discordias y otros excesos.
4. Ya salido la armada del p^{to} desta ciud^d de Santiago en los otros, dotaréis desta esta cuidado no se haga agravio á Españos ni Indios.
5. Tomados los bastimentos necesarios en d^{hos} puertos, partiréis á v^ro destino, haciendo antes alarde de gente ó armas.
6. No consentiréis vaya ningun Indio ni India.
7. Salido al mar y metidas las barcas, en la de v^ro navío visitaréis los otros, y reconoceréis otra vez la gente con las copias [las listas] de cada uno.
8. Apercibiréis á los capitanes y Maestres de los otros navíos que jamas se aparten de v^ra conserva, y haréis quanto convenga para llegar todos juntos á la ysla de Cozumel Santa Cruz, donde será vuestra derecha derrota.
9. Si por algun caso llegaren antes que vos, les mandaréis que nadie sea osado á tratar mal á los Indios, ni les diga la causa porque vais, ni les demande ó interrogue por los cristianos captivos en la Isla de S^{ta} María de los remedios: digan solo que vos hablaréis en llegando.
10. Llegado á d^{ha} ysla de S^{ta} Cruz veréis y sondearéis los puertos, entradas, y aguadas, así della como de S^{ta} María de los remedios, y la punta de S^{ta} María de las Nieves, para dar cumplida relacion de todo.
11. Diréis á los Indios de Cozumel, S^{ta} Cruz, y demas partes, que vais por mandado del Rey á visitarles; hablaréis de su poder y conquistas, individuando las hechas en estas Islas y Tierra firme, de sus mercedes á quantos le servin; que ellos se vengan á su obediencia y den muestras dello, regalándole, como los otros han hecho, con oro, perlas, &c., para que eche de ver su buena voluntad y les favorezca y defienda: que yo les aseguro de todo en su nom-

bre, que me pesó mucho de la batalla que con ellos ovo Francisco Hernandez, y os embió para darles á entender como Su Alteza quiere que sean bien tratados, &c.

12. Tomaréis entera informacion de las cruces que diz se hallan en d^{ha} Isla S^{ta} Cruz adoradas por los Indios, del orígen y causas de semejante costumbre.

13. En general sabréis quanto concierne á la religion de la tierra.

14. Y cuidad mucho de doctrinarlos en la verdadera fee, pues esta es la causa principal porque sus Altezas permiten estos descubrimientos.

15. Inquirid de la armada de Juan de Grijalva, y de la caravela que llevó en su seguimiento Cristóv. de Olid.

16. Caso de juntaros con la armada, búsquese la caravela, y concertad donde podréis juntaros otra vez todos.

17. Lo mismo haréis si 1º se halla la caravela.

18. Iréis por la costa de la Isla de Yucatan S^{ta} María de los remedios, do están seis cristianos en poder de unos caciques á quienes dice conocer Melchor Indio de allí, que con vos llevais. Tratadlo con mucho amor, para que os le tenga y sirva fielmente. No sea que os suceda algun daño, por que los Indios de aquella tierra en caso de guerra son mañosos.

19. Donde quiera, trataréis muy bien á los Indios.

20. Quantos rescates hicieredes meteréis en arca de tres llaves de que tendréis vos una, las otras el Veedor y el Tesorero que nombraredes.

21. Quando se necesite hacer agua, ó leña, &c., empiaréis personas cuerdas al mando d^{el} de mayor confianza, que ni causen escándalo ni se pongan en peligro.

22. Si adentro la tierra viereis alguna poblacion de Indios que ofrecieren amistad, podréis ir á ella con la gente mas pacífica y bien armada, mirando mucho en que ningun agravio se les haga en sus bienes y mugeres.

23. En tal caso dejaréis á mui buen recabdo los navíos; estaréis mui sobre aviso que no os engañen ni se entrometan muchos Indios entre los Españoles, &c.

24. Avisdo que placiendo á Dios N. S. ayais los X^{nos} que en la d^{ha} Isla de S^{ta} M^a de los remedios están captivos, y buscado que por ella ayais la d^{ha} armada é la d^{ha} caravela, seguiréis vuestro viage á la punta llana ques el principio de la tierra grande que agora nuevamente el d^{ho} J. de Grijalva descubrió, y correréis en su busca por la costa della adelante buscando todos los ríos é puertos della fasta llegar á la baia de S. Juan, y S^{ta} M^a de los Nieves, que es desde donde el d^{ho} J. de Grijalva me embió los heridos é dolientes, é me escribió lo que hasta allí le había ocurrido; é si allí hallaredes, juntaros é ir con el J.; porque entre los Españoles que llevais ó allá están no haya diferencias, . . . cada uno tenga cargo de la gente que consigo lleva, . . . y entramos mui conformes, consultaréis lo que mas convenga conforme á esta instrucción, y á la que Grijalva llevó de sus Paternidades y mias; en tal caso los rescates todos se harán en presencia de Francisco de Peñalosa,veedor nombrado por sus Paternidades.

25. Inquiriréis las cosas de las tierras á do llegareis, así morales como físicas, si hai perlas, especiería, oro, &c., part^{te} en S^{ta} M^a de las Nieves, de donde Grijalva me embió ciertos granos de oro por fundir é fundidos.

26. Quando salteis en tierra sea ante v^{ro} S^{no} y muchos testigos, y tomaréis posesión della con las solemnidades usadas: inquirid la calidad de las gentes: porque diz que hay gentes de orejas grandes y anchas, y otras que tienen las caras como perros, . . . á que parte están las Amazonas, que dicen estos Indios que con vos llevais, que están cerca de allí.

27. Las demás cosas dejó á v^{ra} prudencia, confiando de vos que en todo tomeis el cuidadoso cuidado de hacer lo que mas cumpla al servicio de Dios y de SS. AA.

28. En todos los puertos de esta ysla do hallareis Españoles que quieran ir con vos, no lleveis á quien tuviere deudas, si antes no las paga ó da fianzas suficientes.

29. Luego en llegando á S^{ta} M^a de las Nieves, me empiaréis en el navío que menos falta hiciere, quanto hubie-

redes rescatado y hallado de oro, perlas, especería, animales, aves, &c., con relacion de lo hecho y lo que pensais haeer, p^a que yo lo mande y diga al Rey.

30. Conoceréis conforme á derecho de las causas civiles y criminales que ocurrán, como Capitan desta armada con todos los poderes, &c. &c. F^{ha} en esta cibdad de Santiago puerto desta isla Fernandina, á 23 Oct., 1518.

No. VI.—See vol. i. p. 338

EXTRACT FROM LAS CASAS' " HISTORIA GENERAL DE LAS INDIAS," MS., LIB. III. CAP. CXVI

[Few Spanish scholars have had access to the writings of Las Casas; and I have made this short extract from the original, as a specimen of the rambling but vigorous style of a work the celebrity of which has been much enhanced by the jealous reserve with which it has been withheld from publication.]

Esto es uno de los herrores y disparates que muchos han tenido y echo en estas partes; porque simprimero por mucho tiempo aver á los yndios y á qualquiera nacion ydolatria dotrinado es gran desvario quitarles los ydolos; lo qual nunca se hace por voluntad sino contra de los ydólatras; porque ninguno puede dexar por su voluntad é de buena gana aquello que tiene de muchos años por Dios y en la leche mamado y autorizado por sus mayores, sin que primero tenga entendido que aquellos que les dan ó en que les comutan su Dios, sea verdadero Dios. Mirad que doctrina les podian dar en dos ó en tres ó en quatro ó en diez dias, que allí estuvieron, y que mas estuvieran, del verdadero Dios, y tampoco les supieran dar para desaraygalles la opinion erronea de sus dioses, que en yéndose, que

se fuéron, no tornáron á ydolatrar. Primero se han de rraer de los corazones los ydolos, conviene á saber el concepto y estima que tienen de ser aquellos Dios los ydólatras por diuturna y diligente é continua doctrina, y pintalles en ellos el concepto y verdad del verdadero Dios, y despues ellos mismos viendo su engaño y error an de derrocar é destruir, con sus mismas manos y de toda su voluntad, los ydolos que veneraban por Dios é por dioses. Y así lo enseña San Agustin en el sermon, *De pueri centurionis, de verbis Domini*. Pero no fué aqueste el postrero disparate que en estas yndias cerca desta materia se a hecho poner cruces, ynduciendo á los yndios á la reverencia dellas. Si ay tiempo para ello con sinificacion alguna del fruto que pueden sacar dello, si se lo pueden dar á entender para hacerse y bien hacerse, pero no aviendo tiempo ni lengua ni sazon, cosa superflua é ynútil parece. Porque pueden pensar los yndios que les dan algun ydolo de aquella figura que tienen por Dios los christianos, y así lo arán ydólatra adorando por Dios aquel palo. La mas cierta é conveniente regla é doctrina que por estas tierras y otras de ynfieles semejantes á estos los christianos deben dar é tener, quando van de pasada como estos yvan, é quando tambien quisieren morar entre ellas, es dalles muy buen exemplo de hoberas virtuosas y christianas, para que, como dice nuestro Redemptor, viéndolas alaben y den gloria al Dios é padre de los cristianos, é por ellas juzguen que quien tales cultores tiene no puede ser sino bueno é verdadero Dios.

No. VII.—See vol. ii. p. 28

DEPOSITION OF ALONSO HERNANDEZ DE PUERTO-CARRERO, MS.

[Puerto-Carrero and Montejo were the two officers sent home by Cortés from Villa Rica with des-

patches to the government. The emissaries were examined under oath before the venerable Dr. Carbajal, one of the Council of the Indies, in regard to the proceedings of Velasquez and Cortés; and the following is the deposition of Puerto-Carrero. He was a man of good family, superior in this respect to most of those embarked in the expedition. The original is in the Archives of Simancas.]

En la cibdad de la Coruña, á 30 dias del mes de Abril, de 1520 años, se tomó el d^{ho} é depusieion de Alonso Hernandez Puerto-Carrero por mí, Joan de Samano, del qual haviendo jurado en forma so cargo del juramento dijo lo sig^{te}.

Primeramente dijo, que en ell armada que hizo Fran^{co} Hernandez de Cordova é Caycedo é su compaño él no fué en ella; de la qual armada fué el d^{ho} Fran^{co} Hernandez de Cordova por Capitan General é principal armador; é que ha oido decir como estos descubrieron la Isla que se llama de Yucatan.

Item: dijo que en ell armada de que fué Capⁿ General Joan de Grijalva este testigo no fué; pero que vido un Capⁿ, que se diee Pedro de Alvarado, que embió Joan de Grijalva en una caravela con cierto oro é joyas á Diego Velasquez; é que oyó decir, que des que Diego Velasquez vido que traian tan poco oro, é el Capitan Joan de Grijalva se queria luego bolver é no hacer mas rescate, acordó de hablar á Hernandez Cortés para que hiciesen esta armada, por que al presente en Santiago no havia persona que mejor aparejo tuviese, i que mas bien quisto en la isla fuese, por que al presente tenia tres navíos: fuéle preguntado, como savia lo susod^{ho}; respondió, que porque lo avia oido decir á muchas personas de la isla.

Dice mas que se pregonó en el pueblo don este testigo

vivia, que todas las personas que quisiesen ir en ell armada, de todo lo que se oviese ó rescátase habria la una tercera parte, é las otras dos partes eran para los armadores i navíos.

Fuéle preguntado, quien hizo dar el d^{ho} pregun, é en cuyo nombre se hacia, é quien se decia entonces que hacia la d^{ha} armada; respondió, que oyó decir, que Hernando Cortés havia escripto una carta á un Ale^e de aquel pueblo para que hiciese á pregonarlo; é que oyó decir, que Diego Velasquez habló con Hern^{do} Cortés para que juntam^{te} con él hiciesen la d^{ha} armada, por que al presente no habia otra persona que mejor aparejo en la dicha isla para ello tuviese, porque al presente tenia tres navíos, é era bien quisto en la isla; é que oyó decir, que si él no fuera por Capitan, que no fuera la tercera parte de la gente que con él fué; é que no sabe el eoneerto que entre sí tienen, mas de que oyó decir, que amvos hacian aquella armada, é que ponía Hern^{do} Cortés mas de las dos partes della, é que la otra parte cree este testigo que la puso Diego Velasquez, porque lo oyó decir, e despues que fué en la d^{ha} armada visto ciertos navíos que puso Hern^{do} Cortés, en lo que gastaba con la gente, que le pareció que ponía las dos partes ó mas, é que de diez navíos que fuéreron en ell armada los tres puso Diego Velasquez, é los siete Cortés suyos é de sus amigos.

Dijo que le dijeron muchas personas que ivan en ell armada como Hern^{do} Cortés hizo pregonar, que todos los que quisiesen ir en su compañía, si toviesen nescésida de dineros así para comprar vestidos como provisiones ó armas para ellos, que fuesen á él, é que él les socoreria é les daria lo que hoviesen menester, é que á todos los que á él acodian que lo dava, é que esto sabe, porque muchas personas á quien el socorria con dineros que lo dijeron; é que estando en la villa de la Trenidad, vió que él é sus amigos davan á toda la gente que allí estaba todo lo que havian menester; é así mesmo estando en la villa de Sant Cristobal en la

Havana, vió hacer lo mismo, é comprar muchos puercos é pan, que podian ser tres ó cuatro meses.

Fuéle preguntado, á quien tenian por principal armandor desta armada, é quien era público que la hacia; dijo que lo que oyó decir é vido, que Hern^{do} Cortés gastava las dos partes, é que los d^{hos} Diego Velasquez é Hern^{do} Cortés la hiciéron como d^{ho} tiene, é que no sabe mas en esto de este artículo.

Fuéle preguntado, si sabia quel d^{ho} Diego Velasquez fuese el principal por respecto de ser Governador por su Al. en las tierras é islas que por su industria se descobriesen; que no lo sabe, por que no le eran entonces llegados Gonzalo de Guzman é Narvaez.

Fuéle preguntado, si sabe el d^{ho} Diego Velasquez sea lugar teniente de Governador é capitán de la isla de Cuba; dijo que ha oido decir, ques teniente de Almirante.

Fuéle preguntado, si sabia dellasi^{to} é capitulacⁿ que el dicho Diego Velasquez tomó con los Frailes Gerónimos en nombre de S. M., é de la instruccion que ellos para el descubrimiento le diéron; dijo que oyó decir, que les havia f^{ho} relacion que havia descovrierto una t^{rra} que era mui rica, é les embió á pedir le diesen lic^a para vojallá é para rescatar en ella, é los Padres Gerónimos que la diéron, é que esto sabe por que lo oyó decir: fuéle preguntado, si vió este asiento ó poderes algunos de los d^{hos} Padres ó la d^{ha} instruccion; dijo que bien los puede haver visto, mas lo que en ellos iva, no se acuerda mas que lo arriva d^{ho}.

Fuéle preguntado, si vió ó oyó decir, que los dichos poderes é capitulacⁿ de los d^{hos} Padres Gerónimos fuese nombrado Diego Velasquez ó el d^{ho} Cortés; dijo que en los poderes que los P^{es} Gerónimos embiáron á Diego Velasquez que á él seria, é no há Hernando Cortés, por que el d^{ho} Diego Velasquez lo embió á pedir.

Fuéle preguntado, como é porque causa obedecia á Hern^{do} Cortés por Capⁿ General de aquella armada; dijo que porque Diego Velasquez le dió su poder en nombre

de su Al. para ir hacer aquel rescate; é que lo sabe, porque vió el poder é lo oyó decir á todos ellos.

Fué preguntado, que fué la causa por que no usáron con el d^{ho} Hern^do Cortés de los poderes que llevaba del d^{ho} Diego Velasquez; dijo que esta armada iva en achaque de buscar á Juan de Grijalva; que oyó decir, que no tenia poder Diego Velasquez de los Pres Gerónimos para hacer esta armada; é con este achaque que arriva dice hicieron esta armada, é que él usó del poder que Diego Velasquez le dió, é allí rescató.

Fué preguntado, qué fué la causa porque, quando quisieron poblar, le nombraron ellos por Capitan General é justicia mayor de nuevo; dijo que Hernando Cortés, desque havia rescatado é visto que tenia pocos vastim^{tos}, que no havia mas de para bolver tasadamente á la isla de Cuba, dijo que se queria bolver; é entonces toda la gente se juntaron é le requirieron que poblase, pues los Yndios les tenian buena voluntad é mostravan que holgaban con ellos, é la t^{rra} era tan aparejada para ello, é S. M. seria dello mui servido; é respondió, que él no fraia poder para poblar, que él responderia; é respondió, que pues era servicio de S. M. poblar, otejaba que poblasen; é hicieron Alc^s é Rexitores, é se juntaron en su cabildo, é le proveyeron de Xusticia mayor é Capitan General en nombre de S. M.

Fué preguntado, que se hicieron los navíos que lleváron; dijo que desque poblaron venian los maestres de los navíos, á decir al capitan que todos los navíos se ivan á fondo, que no los podian tener encima dell agua; i el d^{ho} Capitan mandó á ciertos maestres é pilotos que entrasen en los navíos é viesen los que estavan para poder navegar, é ver si se podiesen remediar; é los d^{hos} maestres é pilotos digeron, que no havia mas de tres navíos que pudiesen navegar é remediar, é que havia de ser con mucha costa; é que los demas que no havia medio ninguno en ellos, é que alguno dellos se undió en la mar, estando

echada el ancla; é que con los demas que no estavan para poder navegar é remediar se, los dejaron ir al traves; é que esta es la verdad, é firmólo de su nombre.

Dijo que se acuerda que oyó decir, que Hernando Cortés havia gastado en esta armada cinco mill ducados ó castellanos; é que Diego Velasquez oyó decir, que havia gastado mill é setecientos, poco mas ó menos; é que esto que gastó fué en vinos é aceites é vinagre é ropa de vestir, las que les vendió un factor que allá está de Diego Velasquez, en que les vendia el arroba de vino á cuatro castellanos que salia al respecto por una pipa cient. castellanos, el arroba del aceite á seis castellanos, é alomesmo la arroba del vina-gre, é las camisas á dos pesos, y el par de los alpargates á castellano, é un mazo de cuentas de valoría á dos castellanos costándole á él á dos reales, é á este respecto fueron todas las otras cosas; é que esto que gastó Diego Velasquez lo sabe, porque lo vido vender, é este testigo se le vendió hasta parte dello.—Alonso Hernandez Portocarrero declaró ante mí, Johan de Samano.

No. VIII.—See vol. ii. p. 31

EXTRACT FROM THE “CARTA DE VERA CRUZ,” MS.

[The following extract from this celebrated letter of the Municipality of La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz to the Emperor gives a succinct view of the foundation of the first colony in Mexico, and of the appointment of Cortés by that body as Chief Justice and Captain-General. The original is preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna.]

Despues de se aver despedido de nosotros el dicho Ca-çique, y buelto á su casa, en mucha conformidad, como en

esta armada venimos, personas nobles, caballeros, hijos dalgo, zelosos del servicio de n^{ro} Señor y de V^{ras} Reales Altezas, y deseosos de ensalzar su Corona Real, de acrecentar sus Señoríos, y de aumentar sus rentas, nos juntámos y platicámos con el dicho capitan Fernando Cortés, diciendo que esta tierra era buena, y que segun la muestra de oro que aquel Caçique avia traído, se creia que debia de ser mui rica, y que segun las muestras que el dicho Caçique avia dado, era de creer que él y todos sus Indios nos tenian muy buena voluntad; portanto que nos parecía que nos convenia al servicio de V^{ras} Magestades, y que en tal tierra se hiziese lo que Diego Velasquez avia mandado hacer al dicho Capitan Fernando Cortés, que era rescatar todo el oro que pudiese, y rescatado bolverse con todo ello á la Isla Fernandina, para gozar solamente de ello el dicho Diego Velasquez y el dicho Capitan; y que lo mejor que á todos nos parecia era, que en nombre de V^{ras} Reales Altezas se poblase y fundase allí un pueblo en que huviese justicia, para que en esta tierra tuviesen Señorío, como en sus Reinos y Señoríos lo tienen; porque siendo esta tierra poblada de Españoles, de mas de acrecentar los Reinos y Señoríos de V^{ras} Magestades, y sus rentas, nos podrian hacer mercedes á nosotros y á los pobladores que de mas allá viniesen adelante; y acordado esto, nos juntámos todos en concordes de un ánimo y voluntad, y hizimos un requerimiento al dicho capitan, en el qual diximos, que pues él veia quanto al servicio de Dios n^{ro} Señor y al de V^{ras} Magestades convenia, que esta tierra estuviese poblada, dándole las causas de que arriba á V^{ras} Altezas se ha hecho relación, que le requerímos que luego cesase de hacer rescates de la manera que los venia á hacer, porque seria destruir la tierra en mucha manera, y V^{ras} Magestades serian en ellos muy desservidos; y que ansí mismo le pedímos y requerímos que luego nombrase para aquella villa, que se avia por nosotros de hacer y fundar, Alcaldes y Regidores, en nombre de V^{ras} Reales Altezas, con ciertas

protestaciones, en forma que contra él protestámos si ansí no lo hiziesen; y hecho este requerimiento al dicho Capitan, dixo que daria su respuesta el dia siguiente; y viendo pues el dicho Capitan como convenia al servicio de V^{ras} Reales Altezas lo que le pediamos, luego otro dia nos respondió diciendo, que su voluntad estava mas inclinada al servicio de V^{ras} Magestades que á otra cosa alguna, y que no mirando al interese que á él se le siguiese, si prosiguiera en el rescate que traia propuesto de rehacer los grandes gastos que de su hacienda avia hecho en aquella armada juntamente con el dicho Diego Velasquez, antes poniéndolo todo le placia y era contento de hacer lo que por nosotros le era pedido, pues que tanto convenia al servicio de V^{ras} Reales Altezas; y luego comenzó con gran diligencia á poblar y á fundar una villa la qual puso por nombre la rica Villa de Vera Cruz, y nombrónos á los que lá delantes subscribímos, por Alcaldes y Regidores de la dicha Villa, y en nombre de V^{ras} Reales Altezas recibió de nosotros el juramento y solendidad que en tal caso se acostumbra y suele hacer; despues de lo qual otro dia siguiente entrámos en nuestro cabildo y ajuntamiento, y estando así juntos embiamos á llamar al dicho Capitan Fernando Cortés, y le pedímos en nombre de V^{ras} Reales Altezas que nos mostrase los poderes y instrucciones que el dicho Diego Velasquez le avia dado para venir á estas partes, el qual embió luego por ellos y nos los mostró; y vistos y leidos por nosotros, bien examinados segun lo que pudímos mejor entender, hallámos á nuestro parecer que por los dichos poderes y instrucciones no tenia mas poder el dicho capitán Fernando Cortés, y que por aver ya espirado no podia usar de justicia ni de Capitan de allí adelante; pareciéndonos, pues, mui Excellentíssimos Príncipes! que para la pacificacion y concordia de entre nosotros, y para nos gobernar bien, convenia poner una persona para su Real servicio, que estuviese en nombre de V^{ras} Magestades en la dicha villa y en estas partes por justicia mayor y capitán y cabeza, á

quién todos acatasemos hasta hacer relación de ello á Vras Reales Altezas para que en ello proveyesen lo que mas servidos fuesen, y visto que á ninguna persona se podria dar mejor el dicho cargo que al dicho Fernando Cortés, porque demas de ser persona tal qual para ello conviene, tiene muy gran zelo y deseo del servicio de Vras Magestades, y así mismo por la mucha experiencia que de estas partes y Islas tiene, de causa de los quales ha siempre dado buena cuenta, y por haver gastado todo quanto tenia por venir como vino con esta armada en servicio de Vras Magestades, y por aver tenido en poco, como hemos hecho relación, todo lo que podia ganar y interese que se le podia seguir si rescatara como traia concertado, y le proveimos en nombre de Vras Reales Altezas de justicia y Alcalde mayor, del qual recibimos el juramento que en tal caso se requiere, y hecho como convenia al Real servicio de Vra Magestad, lo recibimos en su Real nombre en nro ajuntamiento y cabildo por Justicia mayor y capitán de Vras Reales armas, y así está y estará hasta tanto que Vras Magestades provean lo que mas á su servicio convenga: hemos querido hacer de todo esto relación á Vras Reales Altezas, porque sepan lo que acá se ha hecho, y el estado y manera en que quedamos.

No. IX.—See vol. ii. p. 108

EXTRACT FROM CAMARGO'S "HISTORIA DE TLASCALA," MS.

[This passage from the Indian chronicler relates to the ceremony of inauguration of a Tecuhtle, or merchant-knight, in Tlascala. One might fancy himself reading the pages of Ste.-Palaye, or any other historian of European chivalry.]

Esta ceremonia de armarse caballeros los naturales de México y Tlaxcalla y otras provincias de la Laguna Me-

jicana es cosa muy notoria; y así no nos detendrémos en ella, mas de pasar secundamente. Es de saber, que cualquier Señor, ó hijos de Señores, que por sus personas habian ganado alguna cosa en la guerra, ó que hubiesen hecho ó emprendido cosas señaladas y aventajadas, como tubiese indicios de mucho valor, y que fuese de buen consejo y aviso en la república, le armaban caballero; que como fuesen tan ricos que por sus riquezas se ennoblecian y hacian negocios de hijos y dalgo y caballero, los armaban caballeros por dos, differentemente que los caballeros de linea recta, porque los llamaban Tepilhuan: Al Mercader que era armado caballero, y á los finos que por descendencia lo eran, llamaban Tecuhtles. Estos Tecuhtles se armaban caballeros con muchas ceremonias. Ante todas cosas, estaban encerrados 40 ó 60 dias en un templo de sus Ídolos, y ayunaban todo este tiempo, y no trataban con gente mas que con aquellos que les servian, y al cabo de los cuales eran llevados al templo mayor, y allí se les daban grandes doctrinas de la vida que habian de tener y guardar; y antes de todas estas cosas les daban grandes bejamenes con muchas palabras afrentosas y satíricas, y les daban de puñadas con grandes reprensiones, y aun en su propio rostro, segun atras dejámos tratado, y les horadaban las narices y labios y orejas; y la sangre que de ellos salia la ofrecian á sus Ídolos. Allí les daban publicamente sus arcos y flechas y macanas y todo género de armas usadas en su arte militar. Del templo era llevado por las calles y plazas acostumbradas con gran pompa y regocijo y solemnidad: poníales en las orejas orejeras de oro, y bezotes de lo mismo, llevando adelante muchos truhanes y chocarreros que decian grandes donaires, con que hacian reir las gentes; pero como vamos tratando, se ponian en las narices piedras ricas, oradábanles las orejas y narices y bezos, no con yerros ni cosa de oro ni plata, sino con guesos de Tigres y leones y águilas agudos. Este armado caballero hacia muy solemnes fiestas y costosas, y daban

muy grandes presentes á los antiguos Señores caballeros así de ropas como de esclavos, oro y piedras preciosas y plumerías ricas, y divisas, escudos, rodelas y arcos y flechas, á manera de propinas cuando se doctoran nuestros letrados. Andan de casa en casa de estos Tecuhtles dándoles estos presentes y dadiwas, y lo propio hacen con estos armados caballeros despues que lo eran, y se tenia cuenta con todos ellos. Y era república; y así no se armaban muchos caballeros hidalgos pobres, por su poca posibilidad, sino eran aquellos que por sus nobles y loables hechos lo habian merecido, que en tal caso los cajiques cabeceros y los mas supremos Señores Reyes, pues tenian meromixto imperio con sus tierras, y orca y cuchillo para ejecutar los casos de justicia, como en efecto era así. Finalmente, que los que oradaban las orejas, bezos, y narices de estos, que así se armaban caballeros, eran caballeros ancianos y muy antiguos, los cuales estaban dedicados para esto; y así como para en los casos de justicia y consejos de guerra. Servian estos caballeros veteranos en la república, los cuales eran temidos, obedecidos, y reverenciados en muy gran veneracion y estima. Y como atras dejámos dicho, que al cabo de los 40 ó 60 dies de ayuno de los caballeros nobles los sacaban de allí para llevarlos al templo mayor donde tenian sus simulacros; no les oradaban entonces las orejas, narices, ni labios, que son los labios de la parte de abajo, sino que cuando se ponian en el ayuno, entonces; y ante todas cosas les hacian estos bestiales espectáculos; y en todo el tiempo de ayuno estaba en cura, para que el dia de la mayor ceremonia fuese sano de las heridas, que pudiesen ponerle las orejeras y bezotes sin ningun detrimiento ni dolor; y en todo este tiempo no se lavaban, antes estaban todo tiznados y embajados de negro, y con muestras de gran humildad para conseguir y alcanzar tan gran merced y premio, velando las armas todo el tiempo del ayuno segun sus ordenanzas, constituciones, y usos y costumbres entre ellos tan celebrados.

Tambien usaban tener las puertas donde estaban ayunando cerradas con ramos de laurel, cuyo árbol entre los naturales era muy estimado.

No. X.—See vol. ii. p. 300.

EXTRACT FROM OVIEDO'S "HISTORIA DE LAS INDIAS," MS., LIB. XXXIII. CAP. XLVI

[This chapter, which has furnished me with many particulars for the narrative, contains a minute account of Montezuma's household and way of life, gathered by the writer, as he tells us, from the testimony of different individuals of credit, who had the best means of information. It affords a good specimen of the historian's manner, and may have interest to the Castilian scholar, since the original has never been published, and, to judge from appearances, is not likely to be so.]

Quando este gran Príncipe Montezuma comia, estaba en una gran sala encalada é mui pintada de pinturas diversas; allí tenia enanos é chocarreros que le decian gracias é donaires, é otros que jugaban con vn palo puesto sobre los pies grande, é le traian é meneaban, con tanta facilidad é ligereza, que parecia cosa imposible; e otros hacian otros juegos é cosas de mucho para se admirar los hombres. A la puerta de la sala estaba vn patio mui grande, en que habia cien aposentos de 25 ó 30 pies de largo, cada uno sobre sí, en torno de dicho patíó, é allí estaban los Señores principales aposentados como guardas del palacio ordinarias, y estos tales aposentos se llaman galpones, los quales á la contina ocupan mas de 600 hombres, que jamas se quitaban de allí, é cada vno de aquellos tenian mas de 30 servidores, de manera que á lo menos nunca faltaban 3000 hombres de

guerra en esta guarda cotidiana del palacio. Quando queria comer aquel príncipe grande, daban le agua á manos sus Mugeres, é salian allí hasta 20 dellas las mas queridas é mas hermosas é estaban en pie en tanto que él comia; É traíale vn Mayordomo ó Maestre-sala 3000 platos ó mas de diversos manjares de gallinas, codornices, palomas, tórtolas, é otras aves, é algunos platos de muchachos tiernos guisados á su modo, é todo mui lleno de axi, é el comia de lo que las mugeres le trahian ó queria. Despues que habia acabado de comer se tornaba à labar las manos, é las Mugeres se iban á su aposento dellas, donde eran mui bien servidas; É luego ante el señor allegábanse á sus burlas é gracias aquellos chocarreros é donosos, é mandaba les dar de comer sentados á vn cabo de la sala; é todo lo restante de la comida mandaba dar á la otra gente que se ha dicho que estaban en aquel gran patio; y luego venian 3000 Xicalos i cantaros ó ánforas de brevage, é despues que el señor habia comido ó bebido, é labádose las manos, íbanse las Mugeres, é acabadas de salir de la sala, entraban los negociantes de muchas partes, así de la misma cibdad como de sus señoríos; é los que le habian de hablar incábanse de rodillas quattro varas de medir ó mas, apartados dél é descalzos, é sin manta de algodon que algo valiese; é sin mirarle á la cara decian su razonamiento; é él proveia lo que le parecia; é aquellos se levantaban é tornaban atras retraiéndose sin volver las espaldas vn buen tiro de piedra, como lo acostumbraban hacer los Moros de Granada delante de sus señores é príncipes. Allí habia muchos jugadores de diversos juegos, en especial con vnos fesoles á manera de habas, é apuntadas como dados, que es cosa de ver; é juegan cuanto tienen los que son Tahures entrellos. Ivan los Españoles á ver á Montezuma, é mandábales dar duchos, que son vnos banquillos ó escabelos, en que se sentasen, mui lindamente labrados, é de gentil madera, é decíanles que querian, que lo pidiesen é dárselo han. Su persona era

de pocas carnes, pero de buena gracia é afabil, é tenia cinco ó seis pelos en la barba tan luengos como un gome. Si le parecia buena alguna ropa que el Español tubiese, pedíasela, é si se la dada liberalmente sin le pedir nada por ella, luego se la cobria é la miraba mui particularmente é con placer la loaba; mas si le pedian precio por ella hacíalo dar luego, é tomaba la ropa é tornábasela á dar á los christianos sin se la cobrir é como descontento de la mala crianza dél que pedia el precio, decia: Para mí no ha de haber precio alguno, porque yo soy señor, é no me han de pedir nada deso; que yo lo daré sin que me den alguna cosa; que es mui gran afrenta poner precio de ninguna cosa á los que son señores, ni ser ellos Mercaderes. Con esto concuerdan las palabras que de Scipion Africano, que de sí decian aquella contienda de prestancia, que escribe Luciano, entre los tres capitanes mas excelentes de los antiguos, que son Alexandro Magno, é Anibal, é Scipion: Desde que nascí, ni vendí ni compré cosa ninguna. Así que decia Montezuma quando así le pedian prescio: Otro dia no te pediré cosa alguna, porque me has hecho mercader; vete con Dios á tu casa, é lo que obieses menester pídelo, é dársete ha: É no tornes acá, que no soy amigo desos tratos, ni de los que en ellos entienden, para mas de dexárselos vsar con otros hombres en mi Señorío. Tenia Montezuma mas de 3000 señores que le eran subgetos, é aquellos tenian muchos vasallos cada uno dellos; É cada qual tenia casa principal en Temixtitán, é habia de residir en ella ciertos meses del año; É quando se habian de ir á su tierra con licencia de Montezuma, habia de quedar en la casa su hijo ó hermano hasta quel señor della tornase. Esto hacia Montezuma por tener su tierra segura, é que ninguno se le alzase sin ser sentido. Tenia vna seña, que trahian sus Almoxarifes é Mensageros quando recogian los tributos, é él que erraba lo mataban á él é á quantos dél venian. Dábanle sus vasallos en tributo ordinario de tres hijos uno, é él que no tenia hijos habia de dar vn Indio ó

India para sacrificar á sus Dioses, é sino lo daban, habian de sacrificarle á él: Dábanle tres hanegas de mahiz vna, é de todo lo que grangeaban, ó comian, ó bebian; En fin, de todo se le daba el tercio; É él que desto faltaba pagaba con la cabeza. En cada pueblo tenian Mayordomo con sus libros del número de la gente é de todo lo demas asentado por tales figuras é caracteres quelllos se entendian sin discrepancia, como entre nosotros con nuestras letras se entenderia vna cuenta mui bien ordenada. É aquellos particulares Mayordomos daban quenta á aquellos que residian en Temixtitán, é tenian sus alholíes é magazenes é depósitos donde se recogian los tributos, é oficiales para ello, é ponian en cárceles los que á su tiempo no pagaban, é dábanles término para la paga, é aquel pasado é no pagado, justicaban al tal deudor, ó le hacian esclavo.

Dexemos esta materia, é volvamos á este gran Príncipe Montezuma, el qual en vna gran sala de 150 pies de largo, é de 50 de ancho, de grandes vigas é postes de madera que lo sostenian, encima de la qual, era todo vn terrado é azutea, é tenia dentro desta sala muchos géneros de aves, é de animales. Havia 50 águilas caudales en jaolas, tigres, lobos, culebras, tan gruesas como la pierna, de mucho espanto, é en sus jaolas así mismo, é allí se les llevaba la sangre de los hombres é mugeres é niños que sacrificaban, é cebaban con ella aquellas bestias; é habia vn suelo hecho de la misma sangre humana en toda la dicha sala, é si se metia vn palo ó vara temblaba el suelo. En entrando por la sala, el hedor era mucho é aborrecible é asqueroso; las culebras daban grandes é horribles silvos, é los gemidos é tonos de los otros animales allí presos era una melodía infernal, é para poner espanto; tenian 500 gallinas de racion cada dia para la sustentacion desos animales. En medio de aquella sala habia vna capilla á manera de vn horno grande, é por encima chapada de las minas de oro é plata é piedras de muchas maneras, como

ágatas é cornesinas, nides, topacios, planas desmeraldas, é de otras suertes muchas é mui bien engastadas. Allí entraba Montezuma é se retrahia á hablar con el Diablo, al qual nombraban Atezcatepoca, que aquella gente tienen por Dios de la guerra, y él les daba á entender, que era Señor y criador de todo, y que en su mano era el vencer; é los Indios en sus arreitos y cantares é hablas le dan gracias y lo invocan en sus necesidades. En aquel patio é sala habia continuamente 5000 hombres pintados de cierto betun ó tinta, los quales no llegan á mugeres é son castos; llámanlos papas, é aquestos son religiosos.

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Tenia Montezuma vna casa mui grande en que estaban sus Mugeres, que eran mas de 4000 hijas de señores, que se las daban para ser sus Mugeres, é él lo mandaba hacer así; é las tenia mui guardadas y servidas; y algunas veces él daba algunas dellas á quien queria favorecer y honrar de sus principales: Ellos las recibian como vn don grandísimo. Habia en su casa muchos jardines é 100 vaños, ó mas, como los que vsan los Moros, que siempre estaban calientes, en que se bañaban aquellas sus Mugeres, las quales tenian sus guardas, é otras mugeres como Prioras que las governaban: É á estas mayores, que eran ancianas, acataban como á Madres, y ellas las trataban como á hijas. Tuvo su padre de Montezuma 150 hijos é hijas, de los quales los mas mató Montezuma, y las hermanas casó muchas dellas con quien le pareció; y él tubo 50 hijos y hijas, ó mas; y acacció algunas veces tener 50 mugeres preñadas, y las mas dellas mataban las criaturas en el cuerpo, porque así dicen que se lo mandaba el Diablo, que hablaba con ellas y decíales que se sacrificasen ellas las orejas y las lenguas y sus naturas, é se sacasen mucha sangre é se la ofreciesen, é así lo hacian en efeto. Parecia la casa de Montezuma vna cibdad mui poblada. Tenia sus porteros en cada puerta. Tenia 20 puertas de servicio; entraban muchas calles de agua á ellas, por las quales en-

traban é salian las canoas con mahiz, é otros bastimentos, é leña. Entraba en esta casa vn caño de agua dulce, que venia de dos leguas de allí, por encima de vna calzada de piedra, que venia de vna fuente, que se dice chapictepeque, que nace en vn peñon, que está en la Laguna salada, de mui excelente agua.

No. XI.—See vol. iii. p. 90, et alibi

DIALOGUE OF OVIEDO WITH DON THOAN CANO, AP.
“HISTORIA DE LAS INDIAS,” MS., LIB. XXXIII.
CAP. LIV.

[The most remarkable, in some respects, of Oviedo's compositions is his *Quincuagenas*, a collection of imaginary dialogues with the most eminent persons of his time, frequently founded, no doubt, on the personal communications which he had held with them. In his “History of the Indies” he has also introduced a dialogue which he tells us he actually had with Don Thoan Cano, a Castilian hidalgo, who married Guatemozin's widow, the lovely daughter of Montezuma. He came into the country originally with Narvaez; and, as he was a man of intelligence, according to Oviedo, and his peculiar position both before and after the Conquest opened to him the best sources of information, his testimony is of the highest value. As such I have made frequent use of it in the preceding pages, and I now transcribe it entire, in the original, as an important document for the history of the Conquest.]

DIÁLOGO DEL ALCAYDE DE LA FORTALEZA DE LA CIBDAD É
PUERTO DE SANTO DOMINGO DE LA ISLA ESPAÑOLA,
AUTOR Y CHRONISTA DESTAS HISTORIAS, DE LA VNA
PARTE, É DE LA OTRA, VN CABALLERO VECINO DE LA
GRAND CIBDAD DE MÉXICO, LLAMADO THOAN CANO

ALC. Señor, ayer supe que Vm. vive en la grand cibdad de México, y que os llamais Thoan Cano; y porque yo tube amistad con vn caballero llamado Diego Cano, que fué criado del sereníssimo Príncipe Don Thoan, mi señor, de gloriosa memoria, deseo saber si es vivo, é donde sois señor natural, é como quedástes avecindado en estas partes, é rescibiré merced, que no rescibais pesadumbre de mis preguntas; porque tengo necesidad de saber algunas cosas de la Nueva España, y es razon, que para mi satisfaccion yo procure entender lo que deseo de tales personas é hábito que merezcan crédito; y ansí, Señor, recibiré mucha merced de la vuestra en lo que digo.

THOAN CANO. Señor Alcayde, yo soy él que gano mucho en conoceros; y tiempo ha que deseaba ver vuestra persona, porque os soi aficionado, y querria que mui de veras me tubiesedes por tan amigo é servidor como yo os lo seré. É satisfaciendo á lo que Vm. quiere saber de mí, digo, que Diego Cano, Escrivano de Cámara del Príncipe Don Thoan, y camarero de la Tapicería de su Alteza, fué mi tio, é ha poco tiempo que murió en la cibdad de Caceres, donde vivia é yo soy natural: Y quanto á lo demas, yo, Señor, pasé desde la Isla de Cuba á la Nueva España con el capitán Pámphilo de Narvaez, é aunque mozo é de poco edad, yo me hallé cerca dél quando fué preso por Hernando Cortés é sus mañas; é en ese trance le quebráron vn ojo, peleando él como mui valiente hombre; pero como no le acudió su gente é con él se halláron mui pocos, quedó preso é herido, é se hizo Cortes señor del campo, é truxo á su devucion la gente que con Pámphilo habia ido, é en rencuentros é en batallas de manos en México; y todo lo

que ha sucedido despues yo me he hallado en ello. Mandais que diga como quedé avecindado en estas partes, y que no reciba pesadumbre de vuestras preguntas; satisfaciendo á mi asiento, digo, Señor, que yo me casé con una Señora hija legítima de Montezuma, llamada doña Isabel, tal persona, que aunque se hobiera criado en nuestra España, no estobiera mas enseñada é bien dotrinada é Católica, é de tal conversacion é arte, que os satisfaria su manera é buena gracia; y no es poco útil é provechosa al sosiego é contencamientos de los naturales de la tierra; porque, como es Señora en todas sus cosas é amiga de los christianos, por su respecto é exemplo mas quietud é reposo se imprime en los ánimos de los Mexicanos. En lo demas que se me pregunture, é de que yo tenga memoria, yo, Señor, diré lo que supiere conforme á la verdad.

ALC. Io acepto la merced que en eso recibiré; y quiero comenzar á decir lo que me ocurre, porque me acuerdo, que fuí informado que su padre de Montezuma tubo 150 hijos é hijas, ó mas, é que le acaeció tener 50 mugeres preñadas; É ansí escrebí esto, é otras cosas á este propósito en el capítulo 46, lo qual si así fué, queria saber, é como podeis vos tener por legítima hija de Montezuma a la Sra Doña Isabel vuestra Muger, é que forma tenia vuestro suegro para que se conociesen los hijos bastardos entre los legítimos ó espurios é quales eran mugeres legítimas é concubinas?

CAN. Fué costumbre vsada y guardada entre los Mexicanos, que las mugeres legítimas que tomaban, era de la manera que agora se dirá. Concertados el hombre é muger que habian de contraer matrimonio, para le efectuar se juntaban los parientes de ambas partes é hacian vn areito despues que habian comido ó cenado; é al tiempo que los Novios se habian de acostar é dormir en vno, tomaban la halda delantera de la camisa de la Novia é atábanla á la manta de algodon que tenia cubierto el Novio. É así ligados tomábanlos de las manos los principales parientes

de ambos, é metian los en una camára, donde los dejaban solos é oscuros por tres dias contiguos sin que de allí saliesen él ni ella, ni allá entraba mas de vna India á los proveer de comer é lo que habian menester; en el qual tiempo deste encerramiento siempre habia bailes ó areitos, que ellos llaman mitote; é en fin de los tres dias no hai mas fiesta. É los que sin esta ceremonia se casan no son habidos por matrimonios, ni los hijos que proceden por legítimos, ni heredan. Ansí como murió Montezuma, quedáronle solamente por hijos legítimos mi Muger é vn hermano suio, é muchachos ambos; á causa de lo qual fué elegido por Señor vn hermano de Montezuma, que se decia Cuitecavaci, Señor de Iztapalapa, el qual vivió despues de su eleccion solos 60 dias, y murió de viruelas; á causa de lo qual vn sobrino de Montezuma, que era Papa ó sacerdote maior entre los Indios, que se llamaba Guatimuci, mató al primo hijo legítimo de Montezuma, que se decia Asupacaci, hermano de padre é madre de doña Isabel, é fizose señor, é fué mui valeroso. Este fué él que perdió á Mexico, é fué preso, é despues injustamente muerto con otros principales Señores é Indios; pues como Cortés é los christianos fuéreron enseñoreados de México, ningun hijo quedó legítimo sino bastardos de Montezuma, ecepto mi Muger, que quedaba viuda, porque Guatimuci señor de México, su primo, por fixar mejor su estado, siendo ella mui muchacha, la tubo por muger con la ceremonia ya dicha del atar la camisa con la manta; é no obiéreron hijos, ni tiempo para procreallos; é ella se convirtió á nuestra santa fee católica, é casóse con vn hombre de bien de los conquistadores primeros, que se llamaba Pedro Gallego, é ovo vn hijo en ella, que se llama Thoan Gallego Montezuma; é murió el dicho Pedro Gallego, é yo casé con la dicha doña Isabel, en la qual me ha dado Dios tres hijos é dos hijas, que se llaman Pedro Cano, Gonzalo Cano de Saavedra, Thoan Cano, doña Isabel, é doña Catalina.

ALC. Señor Thoan Cano, suplicoos que me digais

porque mató Hernando Cortés á Guatimuci: ¿revelóse despues, ó que hizo para que muriese?

CAN. Habeis de saber, que así á Guatimuci, como al Rey de Tacuba, que se decia Tetepanquezal, é al Señor de Tezeuco, el capitan Hernando Cortés les hizo dar muchos tormentos é crudos, quemándoles los pies, é untándoles las plantas con aceite, é poniéndolas cerca de las brasas, é en otras diversas maneras, porque les diesen sus tesoros; é teniéndolos en contiguas fatigas, supo como el capitan Cristóval de Olit se le habia alzado en puerto de Caballos é Honduras, la qual provincia los Indios llaman Guaimuras, é determinó de ir á buscar é castigar el dicho Christóval de Olit, é partió de México por tierra con mucha gente de Espanoles, é de los naturales de la tierra, é llevóse consigo aquellos tres principales ya dichos, y despues los ahoreó en el camino; é ansí enviudó doña Isabel, é despues ella se casó de la manera que he dicho con Pedro Gallego, é despues conmigo.

ALC. Pues en cierta informacion, que se envió al Emperador Nuestro Señor, dice Hernando Cortés, que habia sucedido Guatimuci en el Señorío de México tras Montezuma, porque en las puentes murió el hijo é heredero de Montezuma, é que otros dos hijos que quedaron vivos, el vno era loco ó mentecapto, é el otro paralítico, é ináviles por sus enfermedades: É yo lo he escripto así en el capitulo 16, pensando quello seria así.

CAN. Pues escriba Vm. lo que mandare, y el Marques Hernando Cortés lo que quisiere, que yo digo en Dios y en mi conciencia la verdad, y esto es mui notorio.

ALC. Señor Thoan Cano, dígame Vm. ¿de que procedió el alzamiento de los Indios de México en tanto que Hernando Cortés salió de aquella cibdad é fué á buscar á Pámphilo de Narvaez, é dexó preso á Montezuma en poder de Pedro de Alvarado? Porque he oido sobre esto muchas cosas, é mui diferentes las vnas de las otras; é yo querria escrebir verdad, así Dios salve mi ánima.

CAN. Señor Alcayde, eso que preguntais es vn paso en que pocos de los que hai en la tierra sabrán dar razon, aunque ello fué mui notorio, é mui manifiesta la sinrazon que á los Indios se les hizo, y de allí tomáron tanto odio con los Christianos que no fiáron mas dellos, y se siguiéron quantos males ovo despues, é la rebelion de México, y pienso desta manera: Esos Mexicanos tenian entre las otras sus idolatrías ciertas fiestas del año en que se juntaban á sus ritos é ceremonias; y llegado el tiempo de vna de aquellas, estaba Alvarado en guarda de Montezuma, é Cortés era ido donde habeis dicho, é muchos Indios principales juntáronse é pidieron licencia al capitán Alvarado, para ir á celebrar sus fiestas en los patios de sus mezquitas ó qq. maiores junto al aposento de los españoles, porque no pensasan que aquell aiuntamiento se hacia á otro fin; É el dicho Capitan les dió la licencia. É así los Indios, todos Señores, mas de 600, desnudos, é con muchas joyas de oro, é hermosos penachos, é muchas piedras preciosas, é como mas aderezados é gentiles hombres se pudiéron é supiéron aderezar, é sin arma alguna defensiva ni ofensiva, bailaban é cantaban é hacian su areito é fiesta segund su costumbre; é al mejor tiempo que ellos estaban embebecidos en su regocijo, movido de cobdiecia el Alvarado hizo poner en cinco puertas del patio cada 15 hombres, é en él entró con la gente restante de los Españoles, é comenzáron á acuchillar é matar los Indios sin perdonar á vno ni á ninguno, hasta que á todos los acabáron en poco espacio de hora. I esta fué la causa porque los de México, viendo muertos é robados aquellos sobre seguro, é sin haber merecido que tal残酷 en ellos hiciese hecho, se alzáron é hicieron la guerra al dicho Alvarado, é á los christianos que con él estaban en guarda de Montezuma, é con mucha razon que tenian para ello.

ALC. ¿Montezuma, como murió? porque diversamente lo he entendido, y ansí lo he yo escripto diferenciadamente.

CAN. Montezuma murió de vna pedrada que los de

fuera tiráron, lo qual no se hiciera, si delante dél no se pusiera vn rodelero, porque como le vieran ninguno tirara ; y ansí por le cubrir con la rodela, é no creer que allí estaba Montezuma, le diéron vna pedrada de que murió. Pero quiero que sepais, Señor Alcayde, que desde la primera revelion de los Indios hasta que el Marques volvió á la cibdad despues de preso Narvacz, non obstante la pelea ordinaria que con los christianos tenian, siempre Montezuma les hacia dar de comer ; é despues que el Marques tornó se le hizo grand recebimiento, é le diéron á todos los Espanoles mucha comida. Mas habeis de saber, que el capitán Alvarado, como le acusaba la conciencia, é no arrepentido de su culpa, mas queriéndole dar color, é por aplacar el ánimo de Montezuma, dixo á Hernando Cortés, que fingiese que le queria prender é castigar, porque Montezuma le rogase por él, é que se fuesen muertos por muertos ; lo qual Hernando Cortés no quiso hacer, antes mui enojado dixo, que eran vnos perros, é que no habia necesidad de aquel cumplimiento ; é envió á vn principal á que hiciesen el Franquez ó Mercado ; el qual principal enojado de ver la ira de Cortés y la poca estimacion que hacia de los Indios vivos, y lo poco que se le daba de los muertos, desdeñado el principal é determinado en la venganza fué el primero que renovó la guerra contra los Espanoles dentro de vna hora.

ALC. Siempre oí decir que es buena la templanza, é sancta la piedad, é abominable la soberbia. Dicen que fué grandísimo el tesoro que Hernando Cortés repartió entre sus miltes todos, quando determinó de dexar la cibdad é irse fuera della por consejo de vn Botello, que se preciaba de pronosticar lo que estaba por venir.

CAN. Bien sé quien era ese, y en verdad que él fué de parecer que Cortés y los Christianos se saliesen ; y al tiempo del efectuarlo no lo hizo saber á todos, antes no lo supieron, sino los que con él se hallaron á esa plática ; é los demas que estaban en sus aposentos é cuarteles se quedaron, que eran 270 hombres ; los quales se defendieron ciertos dias pele-

ando hasta que de hambre se diéron á los Indios, é guardáronles la palabra de la manera que Alvarado la guardó á los que es dicho; é así los 270 Christianos, é los que dellos no habian sido muertos peleando todos, quando se rindiéron, fuérón cruelmente sacrificados: pero habeis, Señor, de saber, que desa liberalidad que Hernando Cortés vsó, como decis, entre sus miltes, los que mas parte alcanzáron della; é mas se cargáron de oro é joyas, mas presto los matáron; porque por salvar el albarda murió el Asno que mas pesado la tomó; é los que no la quisiéron, sino sus espaldas é armas, pasáron con menos ocupacion, haciéndose el camino con el espada.

ALC. Grand lástima fué perderse tanto Thesoro y 154 Españoles, é 45 yeguas, é mas de 2000 Indios, é entrelllos al Hijo é Hijas de Montezuma, é á todos los otros Señores que trahian presos. Io así lo tengo escripto en el capítulo 14 de esta Historia.

CAN. Señor Alcayde, en verdad quien tal os dixo, ó no lo vidó, ni supo ó quiso callar la verdad. Io os certifico, que fuérón los Españoles muertos en eso, con los que como dixe de suso que quedáron en la cibdad y en los que se perdiéron en el camino siguiendo á Cortés, y continuándose nuestra fuga, mas de 1170; é así pareció por alarde; é de los Indios nuestros amigos de Tascaltecle, que decis 2000, sin dubda fuérán mas de 8000.

ALC. Maravíllome como despues que Cortés se acogió, é los que escapáron á la tierra de Tascaltecle, como no acabáron á él é á los christianos dexando allá muertos á los amigos; y aun así diz, que no les daban de comer sino por rescate los de Guaulip, que es ya término de Tascaltecle, é el rescate no le querian sino era oro.

CAN. Tenedlo, Señor, por falso todo eso; porque en casa de sus Padres no pudiéron hallar mas buen acogimiento los Christianos, é todo quanto quisiéron, é aun sin pedirlo, se les dió gracioso é de mui buena voluntad.

ALC. Para mucho ha sido el Marques é digno es de

quanto tiene, é de mucho mas. É tengo lástima de ver lisiado vn cavallero tan valeroso é manco de dos dedos de la mano izquierda, como lo escrebí é saqué de su relacion, é puse en el capítulo 15. Pero las cosas de la guerra ansí son, é los honores, é la palma de la victoria no se adquieren durmiendo.

CAN. Sin dubda, Señor, Cortés ha sido venturoso é sagaz capitán, é los principales suelen hacer mercedes á quien los sirve, y es bien las hagan á todos los que en su servicio real trabajan; pero algunos he visto yo que trabajan é sirven é nunca medran, é otros que no hacen tanto como aquellos son gratificados é aprovechados; pera ansí fuesen todos remunerados como el Marques lo ha sido en lo de sus dedos de lo que le habeis lástima. Tubo Dios poco que hacer en sanarlo; y salid, Señor, de ese cuidado que así como los sacó de Castilla, quando pasó la primera vez á estas partes, así se los tiene agora en España; porque nunca fué manco dellos, ni le faltan; y ansí, ni hubo menester cirujano ni milagro para guarecer de ese trabajo.

ALC. Señor Thoan Cano, ¿es verdad aquella残酷 que dicen que el Marques vsó con Chulula, que es vna Cibdad por donde pasó la primera vez que fué á México?

CAN. Mui grand verdad es, pero eso yo no lo ví, porque aun no era yo ido á la tierra; pero supe lo despues de muchos que los viéron é se hallaron en esa cruel hazaña.

ALC. ¿Como oístes decir que pasó?

CAN. Lo que oí por cosa mui notoria es, que en aquella cibdad pidió Hernando Cortés 3000 Indios para que llevasen el fardage, é se los diéron, é los hizo todos poner á cuchillo sin que escapase ninguno.

ALC. Razon tiene el Emperador Nuestro Señor de mandar quitar los Indios á todos los Christianos.

CAN. Hágase lo que S. M. mandare é fuese servido, que eso es lo que es mejor; pero yo no querria que padeciesen justos por pecadores: ?quien hace crueidades paguelas, mas él que no comete delicto porque le han de castigar?

Esto es materia para mas espacio; y yo me tengo de envarcar esta noche, é es ya quasi hora del Ave María. Mirad, Señor Alcayde, si hay en México en que pueda yo emplearme en vuestro servicio, que yo lo haré con entera voluntad é obra. Y en lo que toca á la libertad de los Indios, sin dubda á vnos se les habia de rogar con ellos á que los tuviesen é governasen, é los industrasen en las cosas de nuestra sancta fe Católica, é á otros se debian quitar: Pero pues aquí está el Obispo de Chiapa, Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas, que ha sido el movedor é inventor destas mudanzas, é va cargado de frailes mancebos de su órden, con él podeis, Señor Alcayde, desenvolver esta materia de Indios. É yo no me quiero mas entremeter ni hablar en ella, aunque sabria decir mi parte.

ALC. Sin duda, Señor Thoan Cano, Vmd. habla como prudente, y estas cosas deben ser así ordenadas de Dios, y es de pensar, que este reverendo Obispo de Cibdad Real en la provincia de Chiapa, como celoso del servicio de Dios é de S. M., se ha movido á estas peregrinaciones en que anda, y plega á Dios que él y sus Frailes acierten á servirles; pero él no está tan bien con migo como pensais, antes se ha quexado de mí por lo que escrebí cerca de aquellos Labradores é nuevos cavalleros que quiso hacer, y con sendas eruces, que querian parecer á las de Calatrava, siendo labradores é de otras mezclas é género de gente baja, quando fué á Cubagua é á Cumaná, é lo dixo al Señor Obispo de S. Joan, don Rodrigo de Bastidas, para que me lo dixese, y ansí me lo dixo; y lo que yo respondí á su quexa no lo hice por satisfacer al Obispo de San Joan, é su sancta intencion; fué que le supliqué que le dixese, que en verdad yo no tube cuenta ni respecto, quando aquello escreví, á le hacer pesar ni placer, sino á decir lo que pasó; y que viese vn Libro, que es la primera parte destas Historias de Indias, que se imprimió el año de 1535, y allí estaba lo que escrebí; é que holgaba porque estabamos en parte que todo lo que dixe y lo que dexé de decir se provaria facilmente;

y que supiese que aquel Libro estaba ya en Lengua Tos-
cana y Francesa é Alemana é Latina é Griega é Turca é
Aráviga, aunque yo le escreví en Castellana; y que pues
él continuaba nuevas empresas, y yo no habia de cesar de
escribir las materias de Indias en tanto que S. S. M. M.
desto fuesen servidos, que yo tengo esperanza en Dios que
le dexara mejor acertar en lo porvenir que en lo pasado, y
ansí adelante le pareceria mejor mi pluma. Y como el
Señor Obispo de San Joan es tan noble é le consta la ver-
dad, y quan sin pasion yo escribo, el Obispo de Chiapa
quedó satisfecho, aun yo no ando por satisfacer á su pa-
lladar ni otro, sino por cumplir con lo que debo, hablando
con vos, Señor, lo cierto; y por tanto quanto á la carga
de los muchos Frailes me parece en verdad que estas tierras
manan, ó que llueven Frailes, pero pues son sin canas todos
y de 30 años abajo, plega á Dios que todos acierten á ser-
virle. Ya los ví entrar en esta Cibdad de dos en dos hasta
30 dellos, con sendos bordones, é sus sayas é escapularios é
sombreros é sin capas, é el Obispo detras dellos. É no
parecia vna devota farsa, é agora la comienzan no sabemos
en que parará; el tiempo lo dirá, y esto haga Nuestra
Señor al propósito de su sancto servicio. Pero pues van
hacia aquellos nuevos vulcanes, decidme, Señor, ¿que cosa
son, si los habeis visto, y que cosa es otro que teneis allá en
la Nueva España, que se dice Guaxocingo?

CAN. El Vulcan de Chaleo ó Guaxocingo todo es vna
cosa, é alumbraba de noche 3 ó 4 leguas ó mas, é de dia
salia continuo humo é á veces llamas de fuego, lo qual está
en vn escollo de la sierra nevada, en la qual nunca falta
perpetua nieve, é está á 9 leguas de México; pero este
fuego é humo que he dicho turó hasta 7 años, poco mas ó
menos, despues que Hernando Cortés pasó á aquellas
partes, é ya no sale fuego alguno de allí; pero ha quedado
mucho azufre é mui bueno, que se ha sacado para hacer
pólvora, é hai quanto quisieron sacar dello: pero en Guati-
mala hai dos volcanes é montes fogosos, é echan piedras

mui grandísimas fuera de sí quemadas, é lanzan aquellas bocas mucho humo, é es cosa de mui horrible aspecto, en especial como lo viéron quando murió la pecadora de doña Beatriz de la Cueva, Muger del Adelantado Don Pedro de Alvarado. Plega á nuestro Señor de quedar con Vmd., Señor Alcaide, é dadme licencia que atiende la Barca para irme á la Nao.

ALC. Señor Thoan Cano, el Espíritu Sancto vaya con Vm., y os dé tan próspero viage é navegacion, que en pocos dias y en salvamento llegueis á Vuestra Casa, y halleis á la S^{ra} doña Isabel y los hijos é hijas con la salud que Vmd. y ellos os deseais.

No. XII.—See vol. iii. p. 149

GRANT OF CORTÉS TO DOÑA ISABEL MONTEZUMA,
DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR MONTEZUMA;
DATED AT MEXICO, JUNE 27, 1526

[Montezuma, on his death bed, commended, as we have seen in the History, three favorite daughters to the protection of Cortés. After their father's death they were baptized, and after the Conquest were married to Spaniards of honorable family, and from them have descended several noble houses in Spain. Cortés granted, by way of dowry, to the eldest, Doña Isabel, the city of Tacuba and several other places, embracing an extensive and very populous district. I have given here the instrument containing this grant, which has a singular degree of interest, from the notices it contains of Montezuma's last moments. and the strong testimony it bears to his unswerv-

ing friendship for the Spaniards. Some allowance must be made by the reader for the obvious endeavor of Cortés to exhibit Montezuma's conduct in so favorable a light to the Castilian government as might authorize the extensive grant to his daughter.

The instrument in the Muñoz collection was taken from an ancient copy in the library of Don Rafael Floranes of Valladolid.]

PRIVILEGIO DE DOÑA ISABEL MOTEZUMA, HIJA DEL GRAN MOTEZUMA, ÚLTIMO REY INDIO DEL GRAN REYNO Y CIBDAD DE MÉXICO, QUE BAUTIZADA Y SIENDO CHRISTIANA CASÓ CON ALONSO GRADO, NATURAL DE LA VILLA DE ALCANTARA, HIDALGO, Y CRIADO DE SU MAGESTAD, QUE HABIA SERVIDO Y SERVIA EN MUCHOS OFFICIOS EN AQUEL REYNO

OTORGADO POR DON HERNANDO CORTÉS, CONQUISTADOR DEL DICHO REYNO, EN NOMBRE DE SU MAGESTAD, COMO SU CAPITAN GENERAL Y GOVERNADOR DE LA NUEVA ESPAÑA

Por quanto al tiempo que yo, Don Hernando Cortés, capitán general é Governador desta nueva España é sus provincias por S. Mag^d, pasé á estas partes conciertos Navíos é gente para las pacificar é poblar y traher las gentes della al dominio y servidumbre de la Corona Imperial de S. M. como al presente está, y despues de á ellos benido tuve noticia de un gran Señor, que en esta gran cibdad de Tenextitan residió, y hera Señor della, y de todas las demas provincias y tierras á ella comarcanas, que se llamaba Motecuma, al qual hize saber mi venida, y como lo supo por los Mensageros que le envié para que me obedeciese en nombre de S. M. y se ofreciese por su vasallo: Tuvo por bien la dicha mi venida, é por mejor mostrar su buen celo y volun-

tad de servir á S. M., y obedecer lo que por mí en su Real nombre le fuese mandado, me mostró mucho amor, é mandó, que per todas las partes que pasasen los Españoles hasta llegar á esta Cibdad se nos hiciese mui buen acogimiento, y se nos diese todo lo que hubiesemos menester, como siempre se hizo, y mui mejor despues que á esta cibdad llegámos, donde fuimos mui bien recevidos, yo y todos los que en mi compañía benímos; y aun mostró haberle pesado mucho de algunos recuentros y batallas que en el camino se me ofrecieron antes de la llegada á esta dicha cibdad, queriéndose él desculpar dello; y que de lo demas dicho para efetuar y mostrar mejor su buen deseo, huvo por bien el dicho Moteçuma de estar debajo de la obediencia de S. M., y en mi poder á manera de preso asta que yo hiciese relacion á S. M., y del estado y cosas destas partes, y de la voluntad del dicho Moteçuma; y que estando en esta paz y sosiego, y teniendo yo pacificada esta dicha tierra docientes leguas y mas hacia una parte y otra con el sello y seguridad del dicho señor Moteçuma, por la voluntad y amor que siempre mostró al servicio de S. M., y complacerme á mi en su real nombre, hasta mas de un año, que se ofreció la venida de Pánfilo de Narvaez, que los alborotó y escandalizó con sus dañadas palabras y temores que les puso; por cuyo respeto se levantó contra el dicho señor Moteçuma un hermano suyo, llamado Auit Lavaci, Señor de Iztapalapa, y con mucha gente que traxo assí hizo mui cruda guerra al dicho Moteçuma y á mí y á los Españoles que en mi compañía estavan, poniéndonos mui recio cerco en los aposentos y casas donde estavamos; y para quel dicho su hermano y los principales que con él venian cesasen la dicha guerra y alzasen el cerco, se puso de una ventana el dicho Moteçuma, y estándole mandando y amonestando que no lo hiciesen, y que fuesen vasallos de S. M. y obedeciesen los mandamientos que yo en su real nombre le mandaba, le tiraron con muchas hondas, y le dieron con una piedra en le cabeza, que le hicieron mui

gran herida; y temiendo de morir della, me hizo ciertos razonamientos, trayéndome á la memoria que por el entrañable amor que tenia al servicio de S. M. y á mí en su Real nombre y á todos los Españoles, padecia tantas heridas y afrentas, lo qual dava por bien empleado; y que si él de aquella herida fallecia, que me rogava y encargaba muy afetuosoamente, que aviendo respeto á lo mucho que me queria y deseava complacer, tuviese por bien de tomar á cargo tres hijas suyas que tenia, y que las hiciese bautizar y mostrar nuestra doctrina, porque conocia que era mui buena; á las quales, despues que yo gané esta dicha cibdad, hize luego bautizar, y poner por nombres á la una que es la mayor, su legítima heredera, Doña Isabel, y á las otras dos, Doña María y Doña Marina; y estando en finamiento de la dicha herida me tornó á llamar y rogar mui ahinadamente, que si él muriese, que quirase por aquellas hijas, que eran las mejores joyas que él me daba, y que partiese con ellas de lo que tenia, por que no quedasen perdidas, especialmente á la mayor, que esta queria él mucho; y que si por ventura Dios le escapaba de aquella enfermedad, y le daba Victoria en aquel cerco, que él mostraria mas largamente el deseo que tenia de servir á S. M. y pagarme con obras la voluntad y amor que me tenia; y que demas desto yo hiciese relacion á su Magestad de como me dexaba estas sus hijas, y le suplicase en su nombre se sirviese de mandarme que yo mirase por ellas y las tuviese so mi amparo y administracion, pues él hera tan servidor y vasallo de S. M. y siempre tuvo mui buena voluntad á los Españoles, como yo havia visto y via, y por el amor que les tenia le havian dado el pago que tenia, aunque no le pesaba dello. Y aun en su lengua me dixo, y entre estos razonamientos que encargaba la conciencia sobre ello.—Por ende acatando los muchos servicios que el dicho Señor Moteçuma hizo á S. M. en las buenas obras que siempre en su vida me hizo, y buenos tratamientos de los Españoles que en mi compañía yo tenia en su real nombre, y la voluntad que me mostró en

su real servicio; y que sin duda él no fué parte en el levantamiento desta dicha eibdad, sino el dicho su hermano; antes se esperaba, como yo tenia por cierto, que su vida fuera mucha ayuda para que la tierra estuviera siempre mui pacífica, y vinieran los naturales della en verdadero conocimiento, y se sirviera S. M. con mucha suma de pesos de oro y joyas y otras cosas, y por causa de la venida del dicho Narvaez y de la guerra que el dicho su hermano Auit Lavaci levantó, se perdiéron; y considerando así mismo que Dios nuestro señor y S. M. son mui servidos que en estas partes planté nuestra santíssima Religion, como de cada dia la en crecimiento: Y que las dichas hijas de Moteçuma y los demas Señores y principales y otras personas de los naturales desta Nueva España se les dé y muestre toda la mas y mejor Dotrina que fuere posible, para quitarlos de las idolatrías en que hasta aquí han estado, y traerlos al verdadero conocimiento de nuestra sancta fe cathólica, especialmente los hijos de los mas principales, como lo era este Señor Moteçuma, y que en esto se descargava la conciencia de S. M. y la mia; en su real nombre tuve por bien de azetar su ruego, y tener en mi casa á las dichas tres sus hijas, y hacer, como he hecho, que se les haga todo el mejor tratamiento y acogimiento que ha podido, haciéndoles administrar y enseñar los mandamientos de nuestra santa fe cathólica y las otras buenas costumbres de Christianos, para que con mejor voluntad y amor sirvan á Dios nuestro Señor y conozcan y los Artículos della, y que los demas naturales tomen exemplo. Me pareció que segun la calidad de la persona de la dicha Doña Isabel, que es la mayor y legítima heredera del dicho Señor Moteçuma, y que mas encargada me dejó, y que su edad requeria tener compañía, le he dado por marido y esposo á una persona de honra, Hijo-Dalgo, y que ha servido á S. M. en mi compañía dende el principio que á estas partes pasó, teniendo por mí y en nombre de S. M. cargos y oficios mui honrosos, así de Contador y mi lugarteniente de Capitan Gover-

nador como de otras muchas, y dado dellas mui buena cuenta, y al presente está á su administracion el cargo y oficio de visitador general de todos los Indios desta dicha Nueva España, el qual se dice y nombre Alonso Grado, natural de la villa de Alcantara. Con la qual dicha Doña Isabel le prometo y doi en dote y arras á la dicha Doña Isabel y sus descendientes, en nombre de S. M., como su Governor y Capitan General destas partes, y porque de derecho le pertenece de su patrimonio y legítima, el Señorío y naturales del Pueblo de Tacuba, que tiene ciento é veinte casas; y Yeteve, que es estancia que tiene quarenta casas; y Izqui Luca, otra estancia, que tiene otras ciento y veinte casas; y Chimalpan, otra estancia, que tiene quarenta casas; y Chapulma Loyan, que tiene otras quarenta casas; y Escapucaltango, que tiene veinte casas; é Xiloango, que tiene quarenta casas; y otra estancia que se dice Ocoia-cale, y otra que se dice Castepeque, y otra que se dice Talanco, y otra estancia que se dice Goatrizeo, y otra estancia que se dice Duotepeque, y otra que se dice Tacala, que podrá haver en todo mil y docientas y quarenta casas; las quales dichas estancias y pueblos son sujetos al pueblo de Tacuba y al Señor della. Lo qual, como dicho es, soy en nombre de S. M. en dote y arras á la dicha Doña Isabel para que lo haya y tenga y goce por juro de heredad, para agora y para siempre jamas, con título de Señora de dicho Pueblo y de lo demas aquí contenido. Lo qual le soy en nombre de S. M. por descargar su Real conciencia y la mia en su nombre.—Por esta digo; que no le será quitado ni removido por cosa alguna, en ningun tiempo, ni por alguna manera; y para mas sancamiento prometo y soy mi fe en nombre de S. M., que si se lo escriviese, le haré relacion de todo, para que S. M. se sirva de confirmar esta Merced de la dicha Doña Isabel y á los dichos sus herederos y subcesores del dicho Pueblo de Tacuba y lo demas aquí contenido, y de otras estancias á él sujetas, que están en poder de algunos Españoles, para que S. M.

asimismo se sirva demandárselas dar y confirmar juntamente con las que al presente le doy; que por estar, como dicho es, en poder de Españoles, no se las dí hasta ver si S. M. es dello servido; y doy por ninguna y de ningun valor y efeto qualquier cédula de encomienda y depósito que del dicho pueblo de Tacuba y de las otras estancias aquí contenidas y declaradas yo aya dado á qualquiera persona; por quanto yo en nombre de S. M. las revoco y lo restituyo y doi á la dicha Doña Isabel, para que lo tenga como cosa suya propia y que de derecho le pertenece. Y mando á todas y qualesquier personas, vecinos y moradores desta dicha Nueva España, estantes y habitantes en ella, que hayan y tengan á la dicha Doña Isabel por Señora del dicho pueblo de Tacuba con las dichas estancias, y que no le impidan ni estorven cosa alguna della, so pena de quinientos pesos de oro para la cámara y fino de S. Mag^d.— Fecho á veinte y siete dias del mes de Junio de mil y quinientos y veinte y seis años.—Don Hernando de Cortés.— Por mandado del Governador mi señor.—Alonso Baliente.

No. XIII.—See vol. iii. p. 257.

MILITARY CODE: DATED AT TLASCALA, DEC. 22, 1520

[These Regulations, proclaimed by Cortés at Tlascala on the eve of the final march against Mexico, show the careful discipline established in his camp, and, to some extent, the nature of his military policy. The Code forms part of the collection of Muñoz.]

ORDENANZAS MILITARES

Este dia á voz de pregonero publicó sus Ordenanzas, cuyo proemio es este.

Porque por muchas escrituras y corónicas auténticas nos

es notorio é manifiesto quanto los antiguos que siguiéron el ejercicio de la guerra procuráron é travaxáron de introducir tales y tan buenas costumbres y ordenaciones, con las cuales y con su propia virtud y fortaleza pudiesen alcanzar y conseguir victoria y próspero fin en las conquistas y guerras, que hiciesen de hacer é seguir; é por el contrario vemos haber sucedido grandes infortunios, desastres, é muertes á los que no siguiéron la buena costumbre y órden que en la guerra se debe tener; e les haber sucedido semejantes casos con poca pujanza de los enemigos, segun parece claro por muchos ejemplos antiguos é modernos, que aquí se podrian espresar; é porque la órden es tan loable, que no tan solamente en las cosas humanas mas aun en las divinas se ama y sigue, y sin ella ninguna cosa puede haber cumplido efecto, como que ello sea un principio, medio, y fin para el buen reximiento de todas las cosas: Por ende yo, H. C. Capitan general é Justicia mayor en esta Nueva España del mar occéano por el mui alto, mui poderoso, é mui católico D. Carlos nuestro Señor, electo Rey de Romanos, futuro Emperador semper Augusto, Rey de España é de otros muchos grandes reynos é Señoríos, considerando todo lo suso dicho, y que si los pasados falláron ser necesario hacer Ordenanzas é costumbres por donde se rigiesen é gobernasen aquellos que hiciesen de seguir y exercer el uso de la guerra, á los Espanoles que en mi compañía agora están é estubiesen é á mí nos es mucho mas necesario é conveniente seguir y observar toda la mejor costumbre y órden que nos sea posible, así por lo que toca al servicio de Dios nuestro Señor y de la sacra Católica Magestad, como por tener por enemigos y contrarios á la mas belicosa y astuta gente en la guerra é de mas géneros de armas que ninguna otra generacion, especialmente por ser tanta que no tiene número, é nosotros tan pocos y tan apartados y destituidos de todo humano socorro; viendo ser mui necesario y cumplidero al servicio de su Cesarea Magestad é utilidad nuestra, Mandé

hacer é hicemas Ordenanzas que de yuso serán contenidas é irán firmadas de mì nombre é del infrascrito en la manera siguiente.

PRIMERAMENTE, por quanto por la experiencia que habemos visto é cada dia vemos quanta solicitud y vigilancia los naturales de estas partes tienen en la cultura y veneracion de sus ídolos, de que á Dios nuestro Señor se hace gran deservicio, y el demonio por la ceguedad y engaño en que los trae es de ellos muy venerado; y en los apartar de tanto error é idolatría y en los reducir al conocimiento de nuestra Santa Fe católica nuestro Señor será muy servido, y demas de adquirir gloria para nuestras ánimas con ser causa que de aquí adelante no se pierdan ni condenen tantos, acá en lo temporal seria Dios siempre en nuestra ayuda y socorro: por ende, con toda la justicia que puedo y debo, exhorto y ruego á todos los Españoles que en mi compañía fuesen á esta guerra que al presente vamos, y á todas las otras guerras y conquistas que en nombre de S. M. por mi mandado hubiesen de ir, que su principal motivo é intencion sea apartar y desarraiggar de las dichas idolatrías á todos los naturales destas partes, y reducirlos, ó á lo menos desear su salvacion, y que sean reducidos al conocimiento de Dios y de su Santa Fe católica; porque si con otra intencion se hiciese la dicha guerra, seria injusta, y todo lo que en ella se oviese Onoloxio é obligado á restitucion, é S. M. no ternia razon de mandar gratificar á los que en ellas sìrviesen. É sobre ello encargo la conciencia á los dichos Españoles, é desde ahora protesto en nombre de S. M. que mi principal intencion é motivo en hacer esta guerra é las otras que ficiese por traer y reducir á los dichos naturales al dicho conocimiento de nuestra Santa Fe é creencia; y despues por los sozjugar é supeditar debajo del yugo é dominio imperial é real de su Sacra Magestad, á quien juridicamente el Señorío de todas estas partes.

Yt. En por quanto de los reniegos é blasfemias Dios

nuestro Señor es mucho deservido, y es la mayor ofensa que á su Santísimo nombre se puede hacer, y por eso permite en las gentes recios y duros castigos; y no basta que seamos tan malos que por los inmensos beneficios que de cada dia dél recibimos no le demos gracias, mas decimos mal é blasfemamos de su santo nombre; y por evitar tan aborrecible uso y pecado, mando que ninguna persona, de qualquiera condicion que sea, no sea osado decir, No creo en Dios, ni Pese, ni Reniego, ni Del cielo, ni No ha poder en Dios; y que lo mismo se entienda de Nuestra Señora y de todos los otros Santos: sopena que demas de ser executadas las penas establecidas por las leyes del reyno contra los blasfemos, la persona que en lo susodicho incurriese pague 15 castellanos de oro, la tercera parte para la primera Cofradía de Nuestra Señora que en estas partes se hiciese, y la otra tercera parte para el fisco de S. M., y la otra tercera parte para el juez que lo sentenciase.

Yt. Porque de los juegos muchas y las mas veces resultan reniegos y blasfemias, é nacen otros inconvenientes, é es justo que del todo se prohiban y defiendan; por ende mando que de aquí adelante ninguna persona sea osada de jugar á naypes ni á otros juegos vedados dineros ni preseas ni otra cosa alguna; sopena de perdimiento de todo lo que jugase é de 20 pesos de oro, la mitad de todo ello para la Cámara, é la otra mitad para el juez que lo sentenciase. Pero por quanto en las guerras es bien que tenga la gente algun exercicio, y se acostumbra y permítese que jueguen por que se eviten otros mayores inconvenientes; permítese que en el aposento donde estubiese se jueguen naypes é otros juegos moderadamente, con tanto que no sea á los dados, porque allí es curarse han de no de decir mal, é á lo menos si lo dixesen serán castigados.

Yt. Que ninguno sea osado de echar mano á la espada ó puñal ó otra arma alguna para ofender á ningun Español; sopena que él que lo contrario hiciese, si fuese hidalgo, pague 100 pesos de oro, la mitad para el fisco de

S. M., y la otra mitad para los gastos de la Xusticia; y al que no fuese hidalgo se le han de dar 100 azotes publicamente.

Yt. Por quanto acaese que algunos Espanoles por no valar é hacer otras cosas se dexan de aputar en las copias de los Capitanes que tienen gente: por ende mando que todos se alisten en las Capitanías que yo tengo hechas é hiciese, excepto los que yo señalaré que queden fuera dellas, con apercibimiento que dende agora se les face, que él que así no lo hiciese, no se le dará parte ni partes algunas.

Otrosí, por quanto algunas veces suele acaecer, que en burlas é por pasar tiempo algunas personas que están en una capitánía burlan é porfian de algunos de las otras Capitanías, y los unos dicen de los otros, y los otros de los otros, de que se suelen recrecer quistiones é escándalos: por ende mando que de aquí adelante ninguno sea osado de burlar ni decir mal de ninguna Capitanía ni la perjudicar; sopena de 20 pesos de oro, la mitad para la Cámara, y la otra mitad para los gastos de Xusticia.

Otrosí, que ninguno de los dichos Espanoles no se aposente ni pose en ninguna parte, excepto en el lugar é parte donde estubiese aposentada su capitán; sopena de 12 pesos de oro, aplicados en la forma contenida en el capítulo antecedente.

Yt. Que ningun capitán se aposente en ninguna población ó villa ó ciudad, sino en el pueblo que le fuese señalado por el Maestro de Campo, sopena de 10 pesos de oro, aplicados en la forma suso dicha.

Yt. Por quanto cada Capitan tenga mejor acaudillada su gente, mando que cada uno de los dichos Capitanes tenga sus cuadrillas de 20 en 20 Espanoles, y con cada una quadrilla un quadrillero ó cabo de escuadra, que sea personas hábil y de quien se deba confiar; so la dicha pena.

Otrosí, que cada uno de los dichos quadrilleros ó cabos desqudra ronden sobre las velas todos los quartos que les cupiese de velar, so la dicha pena; é que la vela que hallasen

durmiente, ó ausente del lugar donde debiese velar, pague cuatro Castellanos, aplicados en la forma suso dicha, y de mas que esté atado medio dia.

Otroſí, que los dichos quadrilleros tengan cuidado de avisar y avisen á las velas que hubiesen de poner, que puesto que recaudo en el Real no desamparen ni dexen los portillos ó calles ó pasos donde les fuese mandado velar y se vayan de allí á otra parte por ninguna necesidad que digan que les constriñó hasta que sean mandado; sopena de 50 castellanos, aplicados en la forma suso dicha al que fuese hijo dalgo; y sino lo fuese, que le sean dados 100 azotes publicamente.

Otroſí, que cada Capitan que por mí fuese nombrado tenga y traiga consigo su tambor é bandera para que rija y acaudille mejor la gente que tenga á su cargo; sopena de 10 pesos de oro, aplicados en la forma suso dicha.

Otroſí, que cada Español que oyese tocar el atambor de su compaňía sea obligado á salir é salga á acompañar su bandera con todas sus armas en forma y á punto de guerra; sopena de 20 castellanos, aplicados en la forma arriba declarada.

Otroſí, que todas las veces que yo mandase mover el Real para alguna parte cada Capitan sea obligado de llevar por el camino toda su gente junta y apartada de las otras Capitanías, sinque se entrometa en ella ningun Español de otra Capitanía ninguna; y para ello constriñan é apremien á los que así llevasen debaxo de su bandera segun uso de guerra; sopena de 10 pesos de oro, aplicados en la forma suso declarada.

Yt. Por quanto acaece que antes ó al tiempo de romper en los enemigos algunos Españoles se meten entre el fardage, demas de ser pusilanimidad, es cosa fea el mal exemplo para los Indios nuestros amigos que nos acompañan en la guerra: por ende mando que ningun Español se entremeta ni vaya con el fardage, salvo aquellos que para

ello fuesen dados é señalados: sopena de 20 pesos de oro, aplicados segun que de suso contiene.

Otrosí, por quanto acaece algunas veces que algunos Españoles fuera de órden y sin les ser mandado arremeten ó rompen en algun esquadron de los enemigos, é por se desmandar ansí se desbaratan y salen fuera de ordenanza, de que suele recrecerse peligro á los mas: por ende mando que ningun Capitan se desmande á romper por los enemigos sin que primeramente por mí le sea mandado; sopena de muerte. En otra persona se desmanda, si fuese hijodalgo, pena de 100 pesos, aplicados en la forma suso dicha; y si no fuese hidalgo, le sean dados 100 azotes publicamente.

Yt. Por quanto podria ser que al tiempo que entran á tomar por fuerza alguna poblacion ó villa ó ciudad á los enemigos, antes de ser del todo echados fuera, con codicia de robar, algun Español se entrase en alguna casa de los Enemigos, de que se podria seguir daño: por ende mando que ningun Español ni Españoles entren á robar ni á otra cosa alguna en las tales casas de los enemigos, hasta ser del todo echados fuera, y haber conseguido el fin de la victoria; sopena de 20 pesos de oro, aplicados en la manera que dicha es.

Yt. Si por escusar y evitar los hurtos encubiertos y fraudes que se hacen en las cosas habidas en la guerra ó fuera de ella, así por lo que toca al quinto que dellas pertenece á su católica Magestad, como porque han de ser repartidas conforme á lo que cada una sirve é merece: por ende mando que todo el oro, plata, perlas, piedras, plumage, ropa, esclavos, y otras cosas qualesquier que se adquieran, hubiesen, ó tomasen en qualquier manera, ansí en las dichas poblaciones, villas, ó ciudades, como en el campo, que la persona ó personas á cuyo poder viniese ó la hallasen ó tomasen, en qualquier forma que sea, lo traigan luego incontinente é manifiesten ante mí ó ante otra persona que fuese sin lo meter ni llevar á su posada ni á otra parte

alguna; sopena de muerte é perdimiento de todos sus bienes para la Cámara é fisco de S. M.

É por quanto lo suso dicho é cada una cosa é parte dello se guarde é cumpla segun é de la manera que aquí de suso se contiene, y de ninguna cosa de lo aquí contenida pretendan ignorancia, mando que sea apregonado publicamente, para que venga á noticia de todos: Que fuéron hechas las dichas Ordenanzas en la ciudad y provincia de Taxelatéque selado 22 dias del mes de Diciembre, año del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador Jesu Christo de 1520 años.

Pregonáronse las dichas Ordenanzas desuso contenidas en la ciudad é provincia de Taxelatecle, miércoles dia de San Estéban, que fuesen 26 dias del mes de Diciembre, año del nacimiento de nuestro Salvador Jesu Christo de 1520 años; estando presente el magnífico Señor Fernando Cortés, capitan general é Justicia mayor de esta Nueva España del mar Occéano por el Emperador nuestro Señor, por ante mí, Juan de Rivera, escrivano é Notario público en todos los Reinos é Señoríos de España por las Autoridades apostólica y Real. Lo qual pregonó en voz alta Anton Garcia pregonero, en el Alarde que la gente de á caballo é de á pie que su merced mandó facer é se hizo el dicho dia. A lo qual fuéron testigos que estaban presentes, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Alguacil mayor, é Alonso de Prado, contador, é Rodrigo Alvarez Chico, veedor por S. M., é otras muchas personas. Fecho ut supra.—Juan de Rivera.

No. XIV,—See vol. iv. p. 203

TRANSLATION OF PASSAGES IN THE HONDURAS
LETTER OF CORTÉS

[I have noticed this celebrated Letter, the *Carta Quinta* of Cortés, so particularly in the body of the work, that little remains to be said about it here.

I have had these passages translated to show the reader the circumstantial and highly graphic manner of the general's narrative. The latter half of the Letter is occupied with the events which occurred in Mexico in the absence of Cortés and after his return. It may be considered, therefore, as part of the regular series of his historical correspondence, the publication of which was begun by archbishop Lorenzana. Should another edition of the Letters of Cortés be given to the world, this one ought undoubtedly to find a place in it.]

A lake of great width and proportionate depth was the difficulty which we had to encounter. In vain did we turn to the right and to the left; the lake was equally wide in every direction. My guides told me that it was useless to look for a ford in the vicinity, as they were certain the nearest one was towards the mountains, to reach which would necessarily be a journey of five or six days. I was extremely puzzled what measure to adopt. To return was certain death; as, besides being at a loss for provisions, the roads, in consequence of the rains which had prevailed, were absolutely impassable. Our situation was now perilous in the extreme; on every side was room for despair, and not a single ray of hope illumined our path. My followers had become sick of their continual labor, and had as yet reaped no benefit from their toils. It was therefore useless for me to look to them for advice in our present truly critical position. Besides the primitive band and the horses, there were upwards of three thousand five hundred Indians who followed in our train. There was one solitary canoe lying on the beach, in which, doubtless, those whom I had sent in advance had crossed. At the entrance of the lake, and on the other side, were deep marshes, which rendered our passage of the lake considerably more doubt-

ful. One of my companions entered into the canoe, and found the depth of the lake to be five-and-twenty feet, and, with some lances tied together, I ascertained that the mud and slime were twelve feet more, making in all a depth of nearly forty feet. In this juncture, I resolved that a floating bridge should be made, and for this purpose requested that the Indians would lend their assistance in felling the wood, whilst I and my followers would employ ourselves in preparing the bridge. The undertaking seemed to be of such magnitude that scarcely any one entertained an idea of its being completed before our provisions were all exhausted. The Indians, however, set to work with the most commendable zeal. Not so with the Spaniards, who already began to comment upon the labors they had undergone, and the little prospect which appeared of their termination. They proceeded to communicate their thoughts one to another, and the spirit of disaffection had now attained such a height that some had the hardihood to express their disapprobation of my proceedings to my very face. Touched to the quick with this show of desertion when I had least expected it, I said to them that I needed not their assistance; and, turning towards the Indians who accompanied me, exposed to them the necessity we lay under of using the most strenuous exertions to reach the other side, for if this point were not effected we should all perish from hunger. I then pointed in the opposite direction, in which the province of Acalan lay, and cheered their spirits with the prospect of there obtaining provisions in abundance, without taking into consideration the ample supply which would be afforded us by the caravels. I also promised them, in the name of your Majesty, that they should be recompensed to the fullest extent of their wishes, and that not a person who contributed his assistance should go unrewarded. My little oration had the best possible effect with the Indians, who promised, to a man, that their exertions should only terminate with their lives. The

Spaniards, ashamed of their previous conduct, surrounded me and requested that I would pardon their late act; alleging, in extenuation of their offence, the miserable position in which they were placed, obliged to support themselves with the unsavory roots which the earth supplied, and which were scarcely sufficient to keep them alive. They immediately proceeded to work, and, though frequently ready to fall from fatigue, never made another complaint. After four days' incessant labor the bridge was completed, and both horse and man passed without the slightest accident. The bridge was constructed in so solid a manner that it would be impossible to destroy it otherwise than by fire. More than one thousand beams were united for its completion, and every one of them was thicker than a man's body, and sixty feet long.

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At two leagues' distance from this place, the mountains commenced. From no words of mine, nor of a more gifted man, can your Majesty form an adequate idea of the asperity and unevenness of the place which we were now ascending. He alone who has experienced the hardships of the route, and who himself has been an eye-witness, can be fully sensible of its difficulty. It will be sufficient for me to say, in order that your Majesty may have some notion of the labor which we had to undergo, that we were twelve days before we got entirely free of it,—a distance altogether of eight leagues! Sixty-eight horses died on the passage, the greater part having fallen down the precipices which abounded on every side; and the few that escaped seemed so overcome that we thought not a single one would ever afterwards prove serviceable. More than three months elapsed before they recovered from the effects of the journey. It never ceased to rain, day or night, from the time we entered the mountain until we left it; and the rock was of such a nature that the water passed away

without collecting in any place in sufficient quantity to allow us to drink. Thus, in addition to the other hardships which we had to encounter, was that most pressing of all, thirst. Some of the horses suffered considerably from the want of this truly necessary article, and but for the culinary and other vessels which we had with us, and which served to receive some of the rain, neither man nor horse could possibly have escaped. A nephew of mine had a fall upon a piece of sharp rock, and fractured his leg in three or four places; thus was our labor increased, as the men had to carry him by turns. We had now but a league to journey before we could arrive at Tenas, the place which I mentioned as belonging to the chief of Tayeo; but here a formidable obstacle presented itself, in a very wide and very large river, which was swollen by the continued rains. After searching for some time, one of the most surprising fords ever heard of was discovered. Some huge jutting cliffs arrest the progress of the river, in consequence of which it extends for a considerable space around. Between these cliffs are narrow channels, through which the water rushes with an impetuosity which baffles description. From one of these rocks to another we threw large trunks of trees which had been felled with much labor. Ropes of bass-weed were affixed to these trunks; and thus, though at imminent risk of our lives, we crossed the river. If anybody had become giddy in the transit, he must unavoidably have perished. Of these passes there were upwards of twenty, and we took two whole days to get clear, by this extraordinary way.

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It were indeed an arduous task for me to describe to your Majesty the joy which pervaded every countenance when this truly inspiring account was received. To be near the termination of a journey so beset with hardships and labor as ours had been, was an event that could not but be hailed

with rapture. Our last four days' march subjected us to innumerable trials; as, besides being without any certainty of our proceeding in the right direction, we were ever in the heart of mountains abounding with precipices on every side. Many horses dropped on the way; and a cousin of mine, Juan Davilos by name, fell down a precipice and broke an arm. Had it not been for the suit of armor which he wore, he would have been infallibly dashed to pieces. As it was, besides having his arm broken, he was dreadfully lacerated. His horse, upon which he was mounted, having no protection, was so wounded by the fall that we were obliged to leave him behind. With much difficulty we succeeded in extricating my cousin from his perilous situation. It would be an endless task to relate to your Majesty the many sufferings which we endured; amongst which the chief was from hunger; for, although we had some swine which we had brought from Mexico, upwards of eight days had elapsed without our having tasted bread. The fruit of the palm-tree boiled with hogs' flesh, and without any salt, which we had exhausted some time previous, formed our only sustenance. They were alike destitute of provisions at the place at which we had now arrived, where they lived in constant dread of an attack from the adjoining Spanish settlement. They needed not to fear such an event; as, from the situation in which I found the Spaniards, they were incapable of doing the slightest mischief. So elated were we all with our neighborhood to Nico that all our past troubles were soon forgotten, as are the dangers of the sea by the weather-beaten sailor, who on his arrival in port thinks no more of the perils he has encountered. We still suffered greatly from hunger; for even the unsavory roots were procured with the greatest difficulty; and, after we had been occupied many hours in collecting them, they were devoured with the greatest eagerness, in the shortest space of time imaginable.

No. XV.—See vol. iv. p. 241

LAST LETTER OF CORTÉS TO THE EMPEROR

[I give this Letter of Cortés entire, *Ultima y sentidísima Carta*, his “Last and most touching Letter,” as it is styled by Vargas Ponçé, who has embraced it in his important collection from the archives of Seville.* It may be called touching, when we consider the tone of it, as compared with the former correspondence of its author, and the gloomy circumstances under which it was written. Yet we are not to take the complaints contained in it of his poverty too literally; since at his death, but three years after, he left immense estates. But these estates were so much embarrassed by his expensive and disastrous expeditions in the South Sea that his income during the rest of his life seems to have been scarcely sufficient to meet his ordinary expenditure. The last days of Cortés, wasted in ineffectual attempts to obtain redress from the court whom he had so signally served, remind us of the similar fate of Columbus. The history of both may teach us that the most brilliant career too often leads only to sorrow and disappointment, as the clouds gather round the sun at his setting.]

Pensé que haber trabajado en la juventud me aprovechara para que en la vejez tubiera descanso, y así ha qua-

*[It has since been printed in the Col. de Doc. inéd. para la Hist. de España, tom. i., affording an opportunity for correcting the almost innumerable errors which disfigure the transcription of Vargas Ponçé and render it scarcely intelligible.—Ed.]

renta años que me he ocupado en no dormir, mal comer, y á las veces ni bien ni mal, traer las armas á cuestas, poner la persona en peligro, gastar mi hacienda y edad, todo en servicio de Dios, trayendo obejas en su corral muy remotas de nuestro hemisferio, ignotas, y no escriptas en nuestras Escrituras, y acrecentando y dilatando el nombre y patrimonio de mi Rey, ganándole y trayéndole á su yugo y Real cetro muchos y muy grandes reynos y señoríos de muchas bárvaras naciones y gentes, ganados por mi propia persona y espensas, sin ser ayudado de cosa alguna, hantes muy estorvado por muchos émulos y invidiosos, que como sanguijuelas han reventado de artos de mi sangre. De la parte que á Dios cupo de mis trabajos y vigilias asaz estoy pagado, porque seyendo la obra suya, quiso tomarme por medio, y que las gentes me atribuyesen alguna parte, aunque quien conociere de mí lo que yo, beré claro que no sin causa la divina providencia quiso que una hobra tan grande se acavase por el mas flaco é inútil medio que se pudo hallar, porque á solo dios fuese el atributo. De lo que á mi rey quedó, la remuneracion siempre estuve satisfecho, que ceteris paribus no fuera menor por ser en tiempo de V. M., que nunca estos reynos de España, donde yo soy natural y á quien cupo este beneficio, fuéreron poseydos de tan grande y Católico príncipe, magnánimo y poderoso Rey; y así V. M., la primera vez que vesé las manos y entregué los frutos de mis servicios, mostró reconocimiento dellos y comenzó á mostrar voluntad de me hacer gratificacion, honrrando mi persona con palabras y hobras, que pareciéndome á mí que no se equiparaban á mis méritos, V. M. sabe que rehusé yo de recibir. V. M. me dijo y mandó que las aceptase, porque pareciese que me comenzaba á hacer alguna merced, y que no las recibiese por pago de mis servicios; porque V. M. se queria haber con migo, como se han los que se muestran á tirar la ballesta, que los primeros tiros dan fuera del terrero, y enmendando dan en él y en el blanco y fiel; que la merced que V. M. me

hacia hera dar fuera del terrero, y que iria enmendando hasta dar en el fiel de lo que yo merecia; y pues que no se me quitava nada de lo que tenia, ni se me habia de quitar, que recibiese lo que me dava; y ansí vesé las manos á V. M. por ello, y enbolviendo las espaldas quitóseme lo que tenia todo, y no se me cumplió la merced que V. M. me hizo. Y demas destas palabras que V. M. me dijo, y obras que me prometió, que, pues tiene tan buena memoria, no se le habrán olvidado, por cartas de V. M. firmadas de su real nombre tengo otras muy mayores. Y pues mis servicios hechos hasta allí son beneméritos de las obras y promesas que V. M. me hizo, y despues acá no lo han desmerecido; antes nunca he cesado de servir y acrecentar el Patrimonio de estos reynos, con mil estorvos, que si no obiera tenido no fuera menos lo acrecentado, despues que la merced se me hizo, que lo hecho porque la merecí, no sé porque no se me cumple la promesa de las merecidas ofrecidas, y se me quitan las hechas. Y si quisieren decir que no se me quitan, pues poseo algo; cierto es que nada é inútil son una mesma cosa, y lo que tengo es tan sin fruto, que me fuera arto mejor no tenerlo, porque obiera entendido en mis grangerías, y no gastado el fruto de ellas por defenderme del fiscal de V. M., que a sido y es mas dificultoso que ganar la tierra de los enemigos; así que mi trabajo aprovechó para mi contentamiento de haber hecho el dever, y no para conseguir el efecto dél, pues no solo no se me siguió reposa á la vejez, mas trabajo hasta la muerte; y pluguiese á Dios que no pasase adelante, sino que con la corporal se acabase, y no se estendiese á la perpetua, porque quien tanto trabajo tiene en defender el cuerpo no puede dejar de ofender al ánima. Suplico á V. M. no permita que á tan notorios servicios haya tan poco mi raniente, y pues es de creer que no es á culpa de V. M. que las gentes lo sepan; porque como esta obra que Dios hizo por mi medio es tan grande y maravillosa, y se ha estendido la fama de ella por todos los reynos de V. M. y de los otros reyes cristianos y aun

por algunos infieles, en estos donde hay noticia del pleito de entre el fiscal y mí, no se trata de cosa mas; y unos atribuyen la culpa al fiscal, otros á culpas mias; y estas no las hallan tan grandes, que si bastasen para por ellas negárseme el premio, no bastasen tambien para quitarme la vida, honrra, y hacienda; y que pues esto no se hace que no deve ser mia la culpa. A V. M. ninguna se atribuye; porque si V. M. quisiese quitarme lo que me dió, poder tiene para ejecutarlo, pues al que quiere y puede nada hay imposible; decir que se vuscan formas para colorar la obra, y que no se sienta el intento, ni caven ni pueden caber en los reyes unjidos por Dios tales medios, porque para con él no hay color que no sea transparente, para con el mundo no hay para que colorarlo, por que así lo quiero, así lo mando, es el descargo de lo que los reyes hacen. Yo supliqué á V. M. en Madrid fuese servido de aclarar la boluntad que tubo de hacerme merced en pago de mis servicios, y le traje á la memoria algunos de ellos; dijome V. M. que mandaria á los del su consejo que me despachasen; pensé que se les dejava mandado lo que abian de hacer, porque V. M. me dijo que no queria que trajese pleyto con el fiscal: cuando quise saberlo, dijeronme que me defendiese de la demanda del fiscal, porque havia de ir por tela de justicia, y por ella se habia de sentenciar: sentílo por grave, y escrebí á V. M. á Barcelona, suplicándole que pues era servido de entrar en juicio de su siervo, lo fuese en que obiese Jueces sin sospecha y V. M. mandase que con los del Consejo de las Indias se juntasen algunos de los otros, pues todos son criados de V. M., y que juntos lo determinasen; no fué V. M. servido, que no puedo alcanzar la causa, pues quantos mas lo viesen mejor alcanzarian lo que se devia hacer. Véome viejo y pobre y empeñado en este reyno en mas de veinte mil ducados, sin mas de ciento otros, que he gastado de los que traje é me han enviado, que algunos de ellos debo tambien que los an tomado prestados para enviarme, y todos corren cambios; y en cinco años poco

menos que ha que salí de mi casa, no es mucho lo que he gastado, pues nunca ha salido de la Corte, con tres hijos que traygo en ella, con letrados, procuradores, y solicitadores; que todo fuera mejor empleado que V. M. se sirviera de ello y de lo que yo mas hoviera adquirido en esta tiempo; ha ayudado tambien la ida de argel. Pareceme que al cojer del fruto de mis trabajos no devia hecharlo en basijas rotas, y dejarlo en juicio de pocos, sino tornar á suplicar á V. M. sea servido que todos quantos jueces V. M. tiene en sus Consejos conozcan de esta causa, y conforme á justicia la sentenciase.—Yo he sentido del obispo de Cuenca que desea que obiese para esto otros jueces demas de los que hay; porque él y el licenciado Salmeron, nucbo Oidor en este Consejo de Indias, son los que me despojaron sin hoyrme de hecho, siendo jueces en la nueva España, como lo tengo provado, y con quien yo traigo pleito sobre el dicho despojo, y les pido cantidad de dineros de los intereses y rentas de lo que me despojaron; y está claro que no han de sentenciar contra si. No les he querido recusar en este caso, porque siempre crey que V. M. fuera servido que no llegara á estos términos; y no seyendo V. M. servido que hayan mas jueces que determinen esta causa, serme ha forzado recusar al Obispo de Cuenca y á Salmeron, y pesar mehía en el ánima porque no podrá ser sin alguna dilacion; que para mí no puede ser cosa mas dañosa, porque he sesenta años, y anda en cinco que salí de mi casa, y no tengo mas de un hijo Varon que me suceda; y aunque tengo la muger moza para poder tener mas, mi hedad no sufre esperar mucho; y si no tubiera otro, y dios dispusiera de este sin dejar sucesion, ¿que me habria aprovechado lo adquirido? pues subcediendo hijas se pirede la memoria. Otra y otra vez torno á suplicar á V. M. sea servido que con los Jueces del Consejo de Indias se junten otros jueces de estos otros Consejos; pues todos son criados de V. M., y les fia la governacion de sus reynos y su real conciencia no es inconveniente fiarles que determinen sobre una escriptura

de merced, que V. M. hizo á un su vasallo de una partecica de un gran todo con que el servió á V. M., sin costar trabajo ni peligro en su real persona, ni cuidado de espíritu de proveer como se hiciese, ni costa de dineros para pagar la gente que lo hizo, y que tan limpia y lealmente servió, no solo en la tierra que ganó, pero con mucha cantidad de oro y plata y piedra de los despojos que en ella ubo; y que V. M. mande á los jueces que fuere servido que entiendan en ello, que en un cierto tiempo, que V. M. les señale, lo determinen y sentencien sin que haya esta dilacion; y esta será para mí muy gran merced; porque á dilatarse, dejarlo hé perder y volverme á mi casa: porque no tengo ya edad para andar por mesones, sino para recogerme á aclarar mi cuenta con Dios, pues la tengo larga, y poca vida para dar los descargos, y será mejor dejar perder la acienda que el ánima. *Sacra Magestad: Dios Nuestro Señor guarde la muy Real persona de V. M. con el acrecentamiento de Reynos y estados que V. M. desea. De Valladolid á tres de Febrero de quinientos quarenta y quatro años. De V. C. M. muy humilde siervo y vasallo, que sus muy reales pies y manos besa.—El Marques de Valle.*

Cuvierta á la S. C. C. M., El Emperador y Rey de las Españas.

Tiene este decreto:—A su Mag. del Marques del Valle, 3 de Febrero de 44:—*Nay que responder:* parece letra de Covos.

Original. Archivo de Indias.

No. XVI.—See vol. iv. p. 248

FUNERAL OBSEQUIES OF CORTÉS

[The original of this document is in the Hospital of Jesus, at Mexico; and the following literal translation was made from a copy sent to me from that capital.]

THE INTERMENT OF THE MARQUIS OF THE VALLEY OF
OAJACA, HERNAN CORTÉS, AND OF HIS DESCENDANT,
DON PEDRO CORTÉS, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THIS CITY
OF MEXICO, FEB. 24, 1629

The remains of Don Hernan Cortés (the first Marquis of the Valley of Oajaca), which lay in the monastery of St. Francis for more than fifty years since they had been brought from Castilleja de la Cuesta, were carried in funeral procession. It also happened that Don Pedro Cortés, Marquis of the Valley, died at the court of Mexico, Jan. 30, 1629. The Lord Archbishop of Mexico, D. Francisco Manso de Zuñiga, and his Excellency the Viceroy, Marquis of Serralbo, agreed that the two funerals should be conducted together, paying the greatest honor to the ashes of Hernando Cortés. The place of interment was the church of St. Francis in Mexico. The procession set forth from the palace of the Marquis of the Valley. In the advance were carried the banners of the various associations; then followed the different orders of the religious fraternities, all the tribunals of Mexico, and the members of the Audience. Next came the Archbishop and the Chapter of the cathedral. Then was borne along the corpse of the Marquis Don Pedro Cortés in an open coffin, succeeded by the remains of Don Hernando Cortés, in a coffin covered with black velvet. A banner of pure white, with a crucifix, an image of the Virgin and of St. John the Evangelist, embroidered in gold, was carried on one side. On the other were the armorial bearings of the King of Spain, also worked in gold. This standard was on the right hand of the body. On the left hand was carried another banner, of black velvet, with the arms of the Marquis of the Valley embroidered upon it in gold. The standard-bearers were armed. Next came the teachers of divinity, the mourners, and a horse with sable trappings, the whole procession being conducted with the greatest

order. The members of the University followed. Behind them came the Viceroy with a large escort of cavaliers; then four armed captains with their plumes, and with pikes on their shoulders. These were succeeded by four companies of soldiers with their arquebuses, and some with lances. Behind them banners were trailed upon the ground, and muffled drums were struck at intervals. The coffin enclosing the remains of the Conqueror was borne by the Royal Judges, while the knights of the order of Santiago supported the body of the Marquis Don Pedro Cortés. The crowd was immense, and there were six stations where the coffins were exposed to view, and at each of these the responses were chanted by the members of the religious fraternities.

The bones of Cortés were secretly removed from the church of St. Francis, with the permission of his Excellency the Archbishop, on the 2d of July, 1794, at eight o'clock in the evening, in the carriage of the Governor, the Marques de Sierra Nevada, and were placed in a vault, made for this purpose, in the church of Jesus of Nazareth. The bones were deposited in a wooden coffin enclosed in one of lead, being the same in which they came from Castilleja de la Cuesta, near Seville. This was placed in another of crystal, with its cross-bars and plates of silver; and the remains were shrouded in a winding-sheet of cambric embroidered with gold, with a fringe of black lace four inches deep.

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